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OMINOUS DAYS!

OR THE

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

BY THE

REV. E. L. LANGSTON, M.A.

AUTHOR OF
"THE PATHWAY TO FULNESS OF BLESSING,"
"INSPIRATION AND HIGHER CRITICISM,"
"GLAD TIDINGS," &c., &c.

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PROLOGUE

REASONS WHY "OMINOUS DAYS" SHOULD BE READ AND CAREFULLY STUDIED

Ten Eventful Years (1914-1924)

Our Lord was asked by four of His disciples as to "what would be the sign of His Coming, and the end of the age," and in the two remarkable chapters, St. Matt. xxiv., xxv., with the analogous ones of St. Mark xiii. and St. Luke xxi., our Lord answers this most interesting question.

Would to God that every Christian realised how many of the signs and indications that our Lord told have been, and are now being fulfilled before our very eyes.

We are living in an extraordinary age. Do we realise what has happened in the world during the past ten years? In the light of the study of these chapters it is perfectly wonderful and demands our close study and attention.

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After warning His disciples to " take heed " that no man should deceive or lead them astray, He went on to give distinct and clear signs which would be manifest at the closing of this age. These were wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, the preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom as a witness to all nations, the delivering of Jerusalem from Gentile domination, and the awakening of the Jewish race to their national rights, purpose and home. Coinciding with these signs there was to be great unrest amongst nations, with distress, perplexity, and universal fear because of " the things which are coming on the earth," indicating the overthrow of kings, governments and royal powers.

In the light of the above predictions, let us consider some of the things that have come to pass during the years 1914 to 1924.

1. In 1914 there were forty-one Royal dynasties in the world, and ten years later twenty-one of them were no more, including three of what were considered ten years previously the stablest in the world, viz., Germany, Austria, and Russia.

2. In 1914 people imagined that there would be no more war, but we have seen the worst war the world has ever experienced, costing well over ten million lives and over forty thousand million pounds.

3. As a result of this war, the worst famine the world has hitherto known, in which millions have perished from starvation and disease.

4. Following the war and famine, the worst pestilence known to man, exacting a toll of over twelve million lives, concerning which the Sanitary Commissioner of India wrote: "This epidemic, in many respects, is without parallel in the history of disease" (*The Times*, April 12th, 1919).

5. The worst earthquakes in human history. One in China, during December, 1920, which literally shook the globe, and carried suddenly into eternity a quarter of a million lives. Some authorities place this estimate far higher. Then in 1923, the Japanese disaster, which devastated two cities—Tokio and Yokohama—and cost a great loss of life and property.

6. The old Bible lands of Palestine, Egypt, and the district we call Mesopotamia have awakened out of their long sleep, and to-day are the perplexity of politicians. The prophet Isaiah predicted that these same flourishing countries should be devastated and lie barren and waste, and we know as a matter of history that this literally came to pass.

But the prophets also stated that a time would come when the Messiah was to be

expected, that these old Bible lands should be brought back again to life and fruitfulness, and we are living at the very period when their restoration is taking place.

7. With the awakening of the old Bible lands, there is also a revival of Jewish national spirit, and the Jewish national home. Facilities have been given to the Jews to return to their own land, and freedom is given to develop both their national and religious ideals.

8. Coinciding with all these remarkable signs there is a continuous world unrest. In no nation can it be said that real peace has been established. Everywhere there is a hidden or open revolt against authority. The spirit of lawlessness is seen in every phase of life—national, political, social, and ecclesiastical—and no one can foretell what a day may bring forth. In no place is security to be found.

" Men's hearts (are) failing them for fear."

In the light of the above signs which our Lord Himself indicated, we cannot but feel that the attitude of the children of God should be to " look up" and to " lift up their heads," for when we see these things begin to come to pass, we know that **He is near.**

PREFACE

It is most gratifying to know that this little book is in such demand that a sixth edition is now wanted.

When the book was first issued, just three months before the Great War broke out in 1914, one had no idea that the prophecies dealt with in this exposition were likely to see such a wonderful fulfilment during the past ten years. Every earnest student of the prophetic Scriptures is profoundly moved and stirred by the things that have happened since 1914, and we all of us feel that the Coming of the Lord Jesus Himself "into the air" for His Church is imminent; also that signs of the setting up of a great anti-Christian empire in the world, governed by the Anti-christ himself are even more clear than previously. These are thrilling and wonderful days, fraught with great possibilities, and every Christian should be alive to the tremendous issues that are at stake.

The one great aim the writer has in bringing this sixth edition before the Christian public is that we may be forewarned and fore-armed, for the day cannot be far off when the

vision of St. John in Revelation xii. 12 is likely to come true. "Woe, to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

We cannot study in the light of the prophetic Scriptures the things that have happened in Europe and the Near East during the past ten years, in the foundation of the League of Nations, the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the opening of the Bible Lands of Egypt, Palestine and Mesopotamia, without realising that "the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," and is working according to a Divinely ordered plan and the great consummation of the world's history is about to come to pass, with the establishment of the Kingdom of God in an open and manifest way with the Lord Jesus Christ as "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

This new edition of "Ominous Days" is nearly twice as large as the first edition of 1914. Several new Chapters have been added, and much more detail is given concerning "the signs of the times" and the seriousness of the days. One is especially anxious that this book may be of real spiritual help to Clergy, Ministers, Bible Class Leaders, and Sunday School Teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

THE following Bible Readings have been published especially at the wish of a number of friends who were present when they were given, and asked for them in a permanent form.

Throughout the Revised Version has almost invariably been used, except in one or two cases where the translation seemed to be wiser in the Authorised Version.

The expression "The Church of God" is always intended to represent the true ἐκκλησια from amongst all denominations, countries and peoples.

Since giving these Bible Readings my attention has been drawn to a remarkable movement—initiated by Mrs. Besant, the Theosophist—called "The Order of the Star in the East," which would have certainly been incorporated in the body of the work had I had the necessary information previously. This Order has been founded to draw together those who believe in the near coming of a Great Spiritual Teacher. Members, however, are free to adopt their own individual beliefs with regard to the identity of this Great World Teacher for whom they look. The following is the declaration of principles, the acceptance of which is all that is necessary for admission to the Order.

Principles of the Order of the Star in the East

1. We believe that a great Teacher will soon appear in the world, and we wish so to live now that we may be worthy to know Him when He comes.

2. We shall try, therefore, to keep Him in our minds always, and to do in His name, and therefore to the best of our ability, all the work which comes to us in our daily occupations.

3. As far as our ordinary duties allow, we shall endeavour to devote a portion of our time each day to some definite work which may help to prepare for His coming.

4. We shall seek to make *Devotion*, *Steadfastness* and *Gentleness* prominent characteristics of our daily life.

5. We shall try to begin and end each day with a short period devoted to the asking of His blessing upon all that we try to do for Him and in His name.

6. We regard it as our special duty to try to recognise and reverence greatness in whomsoever shown, and to strive to co-operate, so far as we can, with those whom we feel to be spiritually our superiors.

Theosophist writers say of this movement:

"The Great One who is the Teacher of the World and the Founder of its religions is about to descend upon the earth once more in order to give us a new presentation of the eternal verities —to draw together all those adherents of EXISTING Religions who are prepared to accept and to study *the wisdom which lies within all of them alike*, and binds them into a unity.

"The world is all the time being guided and governed with consummate wisdom, little as men down here usually see of the scheme, and he may comprehend who will take the trouble to study.

"The terrible need of the world to-day is for some Master Voice—we need a leader, one greater than ourselves, who, seeing the world's mighty problems, will point us along the road which we may walk to their solution—whilst he is preparing for his coming, his children are preparing to welcome him and are getting together to march under his

banner and to carry out his will."—*Mrs. Besant.*

So much for the precepts and tenets of the "Order of the Star in the East."

Mrs. Besant, who is the prophetess of this Order, professes to have a large number of followers in all countries, of all Christian denominations and even of differing religions. Who then is this World Teacher present-day Theosophy is preparing for?

Is it Jesus Christ or the Antichrist?

It is well to notice:

1. There is no mention of the name Jesus Christ as being the Son of God in the principles or tenets of the Order of the Star in the East.

2. The Bible is not honoured as being God's revelation, containing the only way of salvation for all mankind.

3. The teaching of the Lord Jesus is often spoken of in the same breath with Buddha, Confucius and other heathen writers.

4. There is no mention of the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. Sin is not dealt with as rebellion against God; nor is SIN mentioned at all.

6. The Atonement is not once referred to as the means of man's salvation.

7. The badge worn by members of the Order is most significant—viz. David's shield surrounded by a serpent with a kind of cross inserted in the centre.

The little ring on the head of the cross is a symbol in Egyptian hieroglyphics for Eternity. Also, notice that the little perverted cross between the serpent's head and tail is the swastika badge, which has recently become so popular as a favourite design in embroidery, on hatpins and bookmarks, etc. The swastika badge is a well-known heathen symbol.

The serpent or mark of the devil is very evident in this design.

Undoubtedly this Order, to which belong members of all faiths, is a preparation for the coming of a Great Teacher, but that Teacher is not the Christ of Scripture, but the Antichrist.

"The angel of light"—Satan—is thus preparing the way for his great masterpiece who is going to deceive the whole world.

In view of this movement, may I earnestly suggest that this little book, called "Ominous Days," may be carefully read and prayed over, so that all its readers may beware of such deceptions with which the Evil One is endeavouring to deceive mankind.

E. L. L.

OMINOUS DAYS

I

ISRAEL AND THE DISPENSATIONS

Need for the Study of Prophecy

THOSE persons who are reading the daily papers with the whole of the Scriptures from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of the Book of Revelation—the whole of the prophetical Scriptures, as well as those that are historical, and the Gospels and the Epistles—realise that we are living in most serious and ominous days. Things are coming to pass very rapidly before our eyes which tell us unmistakably that the Lord Jesus is very near. When our Lord was here upon the earth we know from the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew how He spoke to the Pharisees and Sadducees of those days. He said: "Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven, but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." Has not our Lord the same complaint to make to-day of the Christian Church, the Church of God upon this earth? There is deep unrest everywhere; but do we realise the import of

"the signs of the times" manifest in the world?

The Holy Spirit the Illuminator

Unfortunately the study of prophecy is held by many to be vain and profitless and hard to be understood. There is no doubt it is a difficult subject, about which there is and has been a great deal of controversy. Possibly no two persons will agree with the deductions of the other with regard to little details. But it must be remembered at the same time there are general principles about which large numbers of students are agreed. It is all-important for those of us who would understand the Scriptures to realise that the Bible is the Word of God; and to understand His Word we must seek, first and foremost, the illumination of God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let us approach this subject, not in the spirit of controversy, but in the spirit of prayer, seeking divine illumination that we may not interpret the words of God according to any preconceived notion, but may lay ourselves absolutely at the disposal of the Holy Spirit that He may teach us the deep things of God.

The More Sure Word of Prophecy

We all agree that God is speaking very solemnly and very clearly by the signs that

we see in the world—unrest amongst the nations, unrest in Christendom, the awakening of heathen people, and a marvellous awakening of the Jewish people, all of which seems to have come to pass, to a great extent, within the past few years. We are all agreed that these things that are coming to pass before our very eyes are messengers from God telling us that " He is near, even at the doors." " We have also a more sure word of prophecy "—but the way in which prophecy is dealt with by many a professor of theology and many a preacher in the pulpit is as if it was the most unsure word on the face of the earth. The Holy Spirit through Saint Peter tells us : " We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts " (2 Peter i. 19).

An Infallible Guide

Fulfilled prophecy is a proof of the inspiration of the Word of God, because the Scripture predictions have literally come to pass as they were uttered, hundreds of years after they were uttered. There are a large number of predictions concerning Israel, Babylon, Egypt and Assyria, and concerning the Messiah, so ancient, so seemingly improbable,

so detailed, that no mortal man could possibly have invented such prophecies, and yet they have been literally fulfilled. It therefore behoves us to approach unfulfilled prophecy with that experience behind us, knowing that, as God has already fulfilled His word in the past, so clearly, so minutely, and in such a detailed way, we are therefore to reasonably expect that unfulfilled prophecy will be fulfilled in precisely the same way. Remembering this fact, it is necessary to emphasise to-day that the Word of God says that " no prophecy ever came by the will of man." God's Word says that. Never mind what other people say ; never mind what great writers say, no matter how great, how good or how clever they may be. God's Word says that no prophecy ever came by the will of man. " Holy men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost." Such a statement precludes many of the deductions of modern scholarship. God the Holy Ghost is the author of His Own Word ; the writers and prophets being just instruments in His Hands.

St. Peter's Testimony

" In the written word of prophecy we have something more permanent ; to which you do well to pay attention—as to a lamp shining

in a dimly-lighted place—until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. But, *Above all, Remember that No prophecy in Scripture will be found to have come from the prophet's own prompting*; for NEVER did any prophecy come by human will, but men sent by God spoke as they were *impelled by the Holy Ghost*" (2 Peter i. 19-21. Weymouth's translation).

GOD'S PLAN FOR MANKIND

The Function of Man

To thoroughly understand the prophetic Scriptures it is absolutely essential to realise that God has a definite plan and purpose for the world, and the more the study of prophecy is proceeded with, the more important it is to understand that fact. Why has man been created? Why are we here upon the earth? Why did God make us? Man undoubtedly was made to be the friend of God and live in communion and fellowship with Him. "God said, Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (Gen. i. 26). Why? That God may dwell with man and man with God. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (St. John i. 14). That is the reason why the world with its pleasures, its work, its beauty, its love, never satisfies the cravings of

man's heart. Man's complement is God and, if one may say so reverently, God's complement is man. Man cannot do without God, and, if we may say so again very reverently, God wants man, to live with Him in unhindered fellowship and communion. That was the plan and purpose of God. We see, in the Garden of Eden, man was placed in very close relationship with his Maker. Then we come down to the New Testament times, and we see that the height of spiritual experience is to have our fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1 John i. 3). It almost seems as if God was isolated and wanted someone to be His friend and to be in touch with Him, and so He made man, and thus His great purpose is to dwell with man.

The ultimate goal of the plans and purposes of God was to effect this union of man with Himself, in the Person of Jesus Christ, and all mankind united to the Godhead through faith in the atoning work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. During seven eras, or dispensations, God is educating, proving and disciplining man to realise three fundamental principles—viz. the holiness of God and the sinfulness of sin and the utter helplessness of man in himself to deliver himself from the thraldom of the evil one and make himself holy.

THE FIRST DISPENSATION

The Age of Innocence

In the dispensation of Eden, the Adamic dispensation, man is seen to be living in innocency and unhindered communion and fellowship with God, fulfilling the purpose for which he was created. " God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good " (Gen. i. 31). But, early in the third chapter of Genesis, that glorious communion of man with his Maker and Creator was broken. The serpent came. It is well to notice the methods of " the serpent " throughout the whole of the Scripture. To-day the devil does not come to men as we have him pictured to us in present-day Christian literature, horned and hoofed, and surrounded with everything evil and everything that, humanly speaking, is vile, loathsome and bad. But the serpent, the devil, the satan of Scripture, always comes to men in the form of an " angel of light " (2 Corinthians xi. 14)—*i.e.* good, reasonable, attractive, fascinating and thus deceiving mankind. A wolf " in sheep's clothing."

The First Critic

At the very outset, in the third chapter of Genesis, the " angel of light " came in this

way and deceived our first parents and thus for a time hindered God's plan and purpose for man. It is most instructive to note the devil's method of procedure. "Yea, hath God said?" Here we get the first destructive critic of the Word of God: "Yea, hath God said?" Later on he perfectly fascinates those two in the garden and blasphemously says: "God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof . . . ye shall be as God" (*R.V.*). "Ye shall be as God." Ye shall be like God "knowing good and evil." And so throughout the whole of the ages the "angel of light" comes with his doubts and his fascinating criticisms and holds up to mankind the alternative: "Ye shall be as God." Thus it has ever been; with the result destructive criticism has now taken possession of a large number of people throughout the whole of Christendom, and as a consequence there is a feeling that the whole Bible is not absolutely reliable and not to be considered as "The Word of God" in its entirety—*i.e.* the whole Bible is not strictly and entirely God's revelation to man.

Now the result of listening to the "angel of light" always brings disaster. Should there be any reader who has come into touch with this destructive criticism of God's Word, let the writer warn him of its disastrous effect.

It brought disaster to our first parents in the Garden of Eden. They listened to the evil spirit, the serpent, in the garden, and as a result lost communion and fellowship with God. They could not look their Maker and Creator in the face. They could no longer walk with God, and God could no longer walk with them. "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Sin always has been, and still is a separater.

As always, however, God in His love ordains that mercy should surround judgment. There was judgment. They were turned out of Eden, and lost heart to heart communion with their Maker and Creator; but in Genesis iii. 15, mercy surrounds judgment. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Consequently there is given to fallen man the hope of a promised seed, a deliverer who should come.

THE SECOND DISPENSATION

The Age of Conscience

The antediluvian, the age before the Flood, when man lived before God according to his conscience, and, as far as we know with no other restrictions. "The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us to know

good and evil." With what result? Good disappears, evil predominates. Good disappears to such an extent that practically throughout the whole world evil reigns. On reading these verses let us remember that the Lord Jesus said that when He comes to this earth it shall be as in the days of Noah. Now, what were those days? "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man . . . whom I have created from the face of the earth; for it repenteth Me that I have made them." And that is to be the condition when Christ comes to this earth—as it was in the days of Noah when God repented Him that He had made man upon the earth (Genesis vi. 5 and 6). The second dispensation, like the first, ended in disaster. Practically all mankind was destroyed. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt. . . . And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Genesis vi.

11-13). "Behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven: and every thing that is in the earth shall die."

Thus, with the Flood, the second dispensation ends also in disaster and judgment, but here again, mercy surrounds judgment. "With thee (Noah) will I establish My covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark" (Genesis vi. 17, 18)—the ark of deliverance, which is a type of the deliverance yet to come.

THE THIRD DISPENSATION

The Age of Government

The Noachian. In this dispensation government is put into man's hands for the first time: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed" (Genesis ix. 6). At the commencement of this age, God made a covenant with Noah and all mankind (Genesis ix. 13). "I do set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth." But, no sooner is this covenant entered into, than Noah is found drunken with wine and horrible sins are committed (Genesis ix. 20-25).

Meanwhile, the "angel of light" was at work amongst the offspring of Noah. In

Genesis xi. 1, we read that "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech." "And they said, Go to, let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and *let us make us a name*" (verse 4). "Ye shall be as God." The same idea is pressed upon them by the evil one. As a result of their sin, judgment falls at the end of this dispensation. "The Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language" (verse 6). "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (verse 7). "They left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel [confusion]; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth"—Babel, or Babylon, the city of sin and rebellion against God.

THE FOURTH DISPENSATION

The Age of Promise

The patriarchal or age of promise. The promised seed becomes more clear. A man is taken from the families of the earth—Abram—with whom in the twelfth chapter of Genesis Jehovah God enters into an unconditional covenant of seven clauses. "I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The seventh

clause being a definite promise to all the families of the earth of blessing through the seed of Abram, which is absolutely unconditional. It is not if he obeys, or if he does this or does that. God entered into a solemn oath and an agreement with Abram that He would bless him ; and through his seed the world should be blessed.

The Seven Clauses and their Fulfilment

The Abrahamic covenant has been fulfilled to a great extent already. " I will make of thee a great nation " has literally come to pass, both through Israel and through Ishmael, from whom the Arabs to-day are descendants. " I will bless thee and make thy name great." There is no greater name on the face of this earth than that of Abraham. His name is revered by all Moslems, Jews and Christians. There is no greater name than that of Abraham on the face of this earth except that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is possibly even greater than His, in that it is more widely known. " I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse." Every nation that has ill-treated the seed of Abraham has suffered—Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Spain, etc. The fairly recent war between Russia and Japan is an instance of the fulfilment of this prophecy. Russia ill-treated the Jews,

the result being Japan humbles proud Russia. In recent years we have had another illustration of this promise to Abraham in the humiliation of both Roumania and Russia. No countries have treated the Jews so badly as these two. "God is not a man that He should lie. Hath He said and shall He not do it?" (Numbers xxiii. 19).

The last part, however, of this covenant has not been fully fulfilled, as we shall see later on. But even this patriarchal age of promise ends with disaster. In spite of the fact that these promises are reiterated time and again to the patriarchs, yet the promised seed is found in bondage, Abraham's descendants being all slaves under the hard task-masters of Egypt.

THE FIFTH DISPENSATION

The Age of the Law

The Mosaic or dispensation of the law. In this age the seed becomes still more apparent. The types and shadows of the Christ are very clearly indicated under the Mosaic code. In Exodus, the nineteenth chapter, there is a promise to Moses and his people. "Now, therefore," God says, "if ye will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant"—the Mosaic covenant—"then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples, for

all the earth is Mine ; and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." God fulfilled His portion of that covenant in looking after the nation by bringing it out of Egypt and guiding them across the wilderness into Canaan, and blessed them with signal and miraculous blessings ; and yet, in spite of the presence of God in the form of the Shekinah glory in their midst, they sinned against the Lord their God and afterwards persistently disobeyed the voice of the prophets, and lost communion with their Maker and Creator. Finally, when our Lord, the promised Seed, came as a Man upon this earth, " Away with Him ! " they cried. " Crucify Him ! Crucify Him ! " " We will not have this man to reign over us." Again this age therefore ended in disaster at the cross of Calvary. The devil did not know that in this case he had over-reached himself, for, from that day to this, for the first time since Eden, the devil has been a conquered foe. Praise God for that !

THE SIXTH DISPENSATION

The Age of the Church

The dispensation of the Church, the age of Grace. " The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ " (John i. 17). This Church age is especially outlined

by St. Paul. " The mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations : but now hath it been manifested to his saints " (Col. i. 26). It is called a " mystery " or " secret," as the word really means ; not a mystery, but a secret which only the initiated can understand. There is a good deal of talk to-day about the Church, but the man of the world, many a Christian also, does not know what the Church really means. The idea of the Church is a secret which was hidden in God from all ages and revealed to St Paul. Hitherto God had manifested His presence in the wilderness under the Mosaic code, in the Shekinah glory that none could approach, except the high priest, and he only for a few moments, once a year, on the Day of Atonement. Then when God Himself came upon this earth in the form of man Israel did not know Him and would not acknowledge Him. But now in the Church age this wonderful secret which was not known in the old days was made known to St. Paul—that God might dwell in man and man dwell in God, through faith in Christ Jesus. " Christ in you, the Hope of Glory " (Col. i. 27).

The Mystery of the Church

Dear friends, do we realise this wonderful fact, that it is God's purpose for us to dwell in

Christ, and that our lives should be hidden "with Christ in God," in unhindered communion, unhindered fellowship, possessing all the fulness of the Godhead in Christ? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who *hath* blessed us"—not will ultimately bless us after many prayers, but "*hath* blessed us"—"with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3).

The Church an Elect Body

Look at Ephesians i. 4. It is one of the most astounding verses in the whole of the Bible. "He chose us in Him [*i.e.* Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love." Each one of us, individually, is as much chosen by God as Abraham, Israel, David, and may we say, almost with bated breath, chosen as definitely as our Lord was. May God give us grace to walk worthy of our calling!

God dwells therefore in man and man dwells in Christ, with all the riches of God at our disposal. We are "hid with Christ in God": a wonderful thought. And so St. Paul says, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in

heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." But, again, even this present dispensation of grace is to end in disaster and judgment for the world, but not for " the Church of God." " The Church " does not mean the Anglican Church, the Roman Church, the Greek Church, or any of the Nonconformist bodies. Members of the Church of God may be in each one of those bodies, but the true Church consists of those who are cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ, who realise Jesus Christ as their Saviour, their Lord and their Master.

The Consummation of the Church

During the Church age the Holy Spirit is gathering out " a remnant according to the election of grace " (Rom. xi. 5) from amongst all nations, and that elect remnant who are trusting or who have trusted in the blood of Jesus Christ belong to the Church of God which is " the body of Christ." As soon as the last soul is gathered into that Church " the dead in Christ shall rise first : Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord " (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17) ; and thus will end, as far as the Church is concerned, the Church of God upon this earth.

The Antichrist

There will then be a personal manifestation of the Antichrist, the great masterpiece of the devil, as an " angel of light," not evil, humanly speaking, but a personality that is to come upon this earth in the form of man who is destined to bewitch the whole of mankind, who will acknowledge him to be the Christ from God. Even the Jews will be deceived and accept him as the Christ, their Messiah. By miraculous deeds and deceiving powers he will delude the whole of mankind and " exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped " (2 Thess. ii. 4). His reign, however, will not last long, for " the Lord shall consume [him] with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy [him] with the brightness of His coming " (2 Thess. ii. 8)—*i.e.* His coming to reign as King upon the earth.

THE SEVENTH DISPENSATION

The Age of the Kingdom

The millennial or kingdom dispensation is to be ushered in by the second Advent of Christ to this earth. " Behold the day of the Lord cometh [Messiah's Day] . . . and His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives " (Zech. xiv. 1, 4). " The Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee "

(verse 5). The saints possibly being the Church of God that has previously been "caught up." "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth" (verse 9).

Fulness of Blessing

Then there will be a time of great blessing such as this world has never seen. The Jews will fulfil their national destiny. Then the promise to Abraham, that covenant with Abraham, will be literally fulfilled. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). The whole earth will be "filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. ii. 14). This world-wide blessing is not brought about through the agency of the Church, but those who are to be the instruments in God's hands are "an holy nation," "the kingdom of priests"—*i.e.*, the Jewish race. This thought underlies nearly all the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament. Read carefully that Psalm that is sung so often in our churches, which is at the same time a national prayer of the Jews: the sixty-seventh Psalm. It is fashionable for Christians to spiritualise it, and rightly so for we are heirs of Abraham by faith; but do not let us forget that none of these promises in the Old Testament with regard to restoration and blessing refer primarily

to the Church of God, but to the Jewish nation.

Now, look at that Psalm. "God be merciful unto us." Who? The Church? No; the Jewish people, the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us." Why? "That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations." "God shall bless us," the Jew confidently sings; and what will be the result? "And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

Israel's Destiny

Some may assert: "That is all very well. The covenant with Abraham has been fulfilled in Christ." But has it? Have all the families of the earth been brought to know God through the seed of Abraham? Not yet. There are 800 millions of people on the face of the earth who know practically nothing of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and the heathen have been increasing to a greater extent than Christians, except perhaps that now, as a result of large mass movements towards Christianity in India and other places, Christians are beginning to advance in proportion to the growth of the heathen populations of the world. Up to the present, all the families of the earth have not yet been blessed in Abraham's seed. There is, however, a prophecy

which tells us of a time when they shall " look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn " (Zech. xii. 10). After which, this nation as missionaries are to be spread among the nations of this earth, no longer to be cursed and hated, but " ten men . . . shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you ; for we have heard that God is with you " (Zech. viii. 23).

STRATEGIC POSITION OF THE JEWISH SEED

Have the Jews forfeited their Birthright ?

It is most important to notice the strategic position of the seed, promised in the fifteenth verse of the third chapter of Genesis, developed in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, and further still developed in the Mosaic code until Christ Himself comes. " Hath God cast away His people ? God forbid. . . . God hath not cast away His people " (Rom. xi. 1, 2). These people to-day are a living miracle. They are scattered amongst all the nations of the earth, being the great argument to sceptic and to infidel that the Word of God is an inspired book, a revelation from God Himself. No sceptic, or infidel, can get over the fact of the presence of the Jew. Five times over he

has been almost annihilated, but each time rescued by God through human agency.

The Jew in the Church Age

Now the question comes with regard to this Church age in which we now are living, What are God's purposes for the Jew? Ever since the day when they said: "Away with Him": "crucify Him": "His blood be on us and on our children," they have been ill-treated by nearly all Christendom. The heathen and the Moslem have treated the Jew much better than the so-called Christians. The Church history of the Middle Ages is full of incidents telling how Jews have been massacred in their thousands and their tens of thousands, just because they were Jews. Even more recently, in the years 1881 and 1905, when the Greek and Roman Churches were keeping their Easter in Russia, celebrating the resurrection of our blessed Lord, over 100,000 Jews, "the brethren of our Lord according to the flesh," were massacred. That is how the so-called "Church" has treated this race. Hath God forsaken His people? "Hath God cast away His people? God forbid." St. Paul says that God has not forsaken His people, and goes on in that wonderful argument in Romans ix., x., xi., to prove that "through their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles." "Through

your mercy"—the mercy of the Gentile Christians—" they also may obtain mercy." God has not forsaken them, nor has He withdrawn one jot or one tittle of the covenant to Abraham and His people.

To the Jew First

Then, if this is so, what purpose has God for the Jews in this Church age? In the Old Testament we are asked to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, because when peace comes to Jerusalem, and the Jews are restored to the land, the King is to come and the kingdom is to be set up and peace, prosperity and blessing are to come throughout the world. But the difficulty in the minds of a great number of Christians is this: they say, " Yes, that is Old Testament teaching, but the Church supersedes it, and therefore we must leave the Jews alone until their Messiah comes." But can we thus abrogate the clear commands concerning the Jew in the New Testament? One of our Lord's last appeals to the young Church was: " that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem " (St. Luke, xxiv. 47). Now why at Jerusalem? It is customary to spiritualise that and say Jerusalem is home, and Judea is a little farther away from home, and so on; but is it realised

that a large number of those Christians to whom that command was given came from Galilee and not Jerusalem, and that therefore it was not home? Then why Jerusalem? On reading the Acts of the Holy Ghost, the Acts of the Apostles, there is brought before our mind's eye a man chosen to be a missionary to the heathen, the Gentiles, the converted rabbi, St. Paul. Notice throughout the whole of his evangelistic tours, what was his plan of campaign. At every place, ofttimes at the risk of his life, he always went "to the Jew first." He would leave one city and go to another city, but always began by preaching to the Jews if possible in the synagogue. Take, for example, Acts xvii. 16, where St. Paul was in Athens, possibly the most cultured city of his day, and, seeing the whole city given up to idolatry, his soul is stirred up within him. He longed to see God glorified in that idolatrous place. Now, what did he do? We see in the seventeenth verse that because the city was given up to idolatry "*therefore* disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews," as if to say the quickest and most effectual way to evangelise idolatrous Athens was through the Jews. The missionary propaganda of the Acts of the Apostles is always along that line.

Are Modern Missions making a Mistake?

Did the Church of God make a mistake in emphasising, as they did in the first two centuries, going to the Jew first and using the Jew as the missionary to the Gentiles?

Many years ago a young Jew was going along the streets of Breslau in Poland with a pack of glass upon his back. He was just like the ordinary Jew that you find in Poland to-day, dirty, unkempt; but God had a divine purpose for that young fellow. He came into touch with one of the London Jews' Society's missionaries, and as the result of many talks the Holy Spirit convinced him of sin; and now came to him what comes to every Jew—a heart-rending struggle. He knew that if he confessed Christ he would be turned out of house and home, he would have to leave his father and mother, his work, his friends and relations, But, facing that terrible alternative, he was baptized; that very day the Jewish community rose up against him, stoned him like Stephen of old and left him for dead. To make a long story short, he went to America, where he was sent to college; and then ordained. After which he became a missionary, not to his own people, but to the Chinese. With his wonderful linguistic gifts he began to translate portions of the Scriptures into different dialects—the Mongolian

and others. He translated nearly the whole of the Bible into Mandarin, giving to the forty millions of educated Chinese the Word of God in their own tongue. He built two churches and founded two colleges for the training of Chinese for Holy Orders; eventually he became the first Bishop of Shanghai. At the end of last century there was a conference of the missionary societies that were working amongst the Chinese as to the advisability of giving to China, not some sixty or seventy translations of the Scriptures, but one translation for the whole Empire. The dialect chosen was Wenli. The question came up as to who should translate it, and they unanimously decided to ask the old converted Jew, the Bishop of Shanghai, to undertake that task, who did so, believing it to be the last piece of work that God intended him to undertake. The old man might have been seen a few years back, on either side of him the Chinese interpreters and in front of him a typewriter, translating from the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament, and, just as he finished that stupendous task, like the Venerable Bede of old, God took him home. Thus, in that last piece of work he gave to four hundred millions of the human race the Word of God in their own tongue. Many another Jewish convert has

become famous in the foreign mission field and has been used of God mightily in helping to evangelise the world.

Qualifications of the Converted Jew

What is there in a converted Jew? He is usually a man acclimatised to all climates, for the Jew can live almost anywhere, and easily assimilates himself to any conditions. With these qualifications he also has great linguistic gifts.

Not long ago a young fellow with a zeal for God, overflowing with love to his Lord and Master, with a strong missionary spirit as many of these young Jews have, wanted to be a missionary of the London Jews' Society in the east of Europe. After a little talk with him, he was asked: "How many languages can you speak?" "Eight." "What salary do you want?" "£150 a year." Eight languages! Many of the little children in the L.J.S. schools can speak two or three languages with perfect ease, and pick up as many more as they need. Why did God choose this race, train and discipline it? "He hath not dealt so with any nation" as He has dealt with the Jews. Has all this past training been useless? Is it to be of no value or purpose in this Church age? Lord Beaconsfield said of his own race, "The Jews are a God-intoxicated race." To-day the Church of God is face to

face with a Moslem menace. Islam is nothing more nor less than incomplete Judaism. Christianity is complete Judaism. Islam is based upon the oral law of the Jews.

Hebrew Christians, when set on fire by the Holy Spirit, might be the means in God's hand of hastening the glorious day when the Lord Himself shall appear. Undue stress must not be laid upon the strategic position of the Jews as missionaries to the Gentiles, but has not God chosen this race that they might be one of the means of hastening the evangelisation of the world? Realising this great fact, is it not our duty, God helping us, to get to know, as we have not yet known, from God Himself, by prayer, His plan and His purposes for the world, by studying that plan and seeing how by prayer and self-denial we can help it forward? God wants to speak and show His servants how best they can hasten on that glorious time when He shall appear and the remnant shall be gathered in, when "Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit" (Isaiah xxvii. 6).

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee" (Psalm cxxii. 6).

"Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah lxii. 6, 7) (*R.V.*).

II

ISRAEL AND THE ANTI-CHRIST

The Book of Revelation is a God-given Book, in which is revealed to us the things that are yet to come to pass on this earth, and in Heaven ; and for Christians certainly, there is no Book that should be more carefully and prayerfully studied than this God-given revelation ; and perhaps there is not a more solemn part of the whole of the Book as far as the earth is concerned and the people living upon the earth, than the thirteenth verse of the eighth chapter and the first eleven verses of the ninth.

Rev. viii. 13, " And I saw and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe ! woe ! woe ! for them that dwell on the earth " (*R.V.*).

Now, a flying eagle in the prophetic Scriptures is an ominous bird, and a herald of a coming cruel judgment, which is to come without mercy, for no doubt St. John would remember the words of Deut. xxviii. 49 " The Lord shall bring against thee a nation from the end of the earth as swift as an eagle flieth—a nation of fierce countenance which

shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young—he shall besiege thee in all thy gates" (*R.V.*).

This passage was a remarkable foreshadowing of the coming of the Roman Army which was fulfilled in A.D. 70, when at the siege of Jerusalem over one million Jews were massacred, and the people were scattered far and wide as captives throughout the Roman Empire.

Consequently, the Bible does not leave us in any uncertainty about the things that are to come to pass on this earth, and the message of the flying eagle should be taken heed to, especially in these days. If we interpret the Book of Revelation aright, the opening verses of chapter ix. refer to the days in which we are now living, and the things that must surely come to pass on the earth immediately before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Chapter ix. 1 and following verses "the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a *star* from heaven fallen unto the earth and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss (bottomless pit), and he opened the pit of the abyss and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (*R.V.*). Now, the question

is, who is this star? Why should he fall from heaven? What does he come for? What is this bottomless pit, and why should he open it? What is the result of his actions?

Who is this star? He is undoubtedly some supernatural dignitary who reveals himself on this earth in the person of a man, and we shall see that he is a remarkable personality, possessing supernatural gifts.

Now are there any other passages of Scripture that can help us to understand the why and wherefore of the coming of this supernatural being? Our Lord said in St. Luke x. v. 18, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from Heaven." Why did Satan fall from Heaven to this earth? Has this prediction been fulfilled?

In the Old Testament as well as the New, there are several passages which indicate very clearly that we are to expect on this earth an incarnation of Satan, who will appear in the form of a man as like Christ as it is possible to be, and yet he is none other than Satan incarnate. The prophetic Scriptures time after time foreshadow the coming of such a being whom we call Antichrist—who will appear apparently so good, so righteous, so supernatural in his gifts and powers that the world will believe him to be Christ Himself. In Isaiah xiv. he is foreshadowed to us under the

symbol of the King of Babylon who comes to the earth and rules the nations, and the prophet says of him in the twelfth verse "How art thou fallen from heaven O day star, son of the morning" (*R.V.*), and then the prophet adds in the thirteenth verse "and thou saidst in thine heart, I will ascend unto Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God—I will be like the most High."

Has this personality ever existed on this earth, or is he yet to come? We turn from this striking prediction to Ezekiel xxviii. and there we have revealed to us in the opening verses, the same being under another title, called 'Prince of Tyre,' and of him these words are said v. 2. "Thus saith the Lord God, because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said I am God, I sit in the seat of God —yet thou art man, not God, though thou didst set thine heart as the heart of God," and then we read the astounding words—and note this is God's testimony of this man, (verse 3), "behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee," and later on in the chapter we discover that the power behind this personality is called the King of Tyre.

In verse 11 God says of this king of Tyre "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty—thou wast in the Garden of

Eden. Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so, thou wast upon the holy mountain of God . . . thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till unrighteousness was found in thee . . . therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God," " I have cast thee to the ground (earth) and I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee " (verse 19). " All they that know thee amongst the people shall be astonished at thee."

Here, in these words we have the history of the devil. Undoubtedly when first created he was the highest archangel in glory, living in the very secret of the Presence of God. Here is the story of his fall, and with that story we have also revealed to us that this great supernatural being is to come to this earth in human form, and to play a great part in the world's concerns when he comes.

We now turn from these Old Testament passages, and we get a remarkable revelation given by St. Paul in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter ii., verse 3. " Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed the son of perdition . . . who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God,

or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God shewing Himself that he is God" (verse 9). "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

Again, we are told in explicit language that Satan is to come to this earth in the form of man, and when he comes he will be worshipped as God, and will support his claims by remarkable miracles, signs and wonders. Now the question is, when is this to happen and how?

In the opening verses of Revelation ix. there are given to us some more details about the coming of this remarkable personality and what he will do when he does come. A key is given to him, with which he opens the abyss, a bottomless pit. Now the question is, why does he wish to open the bottomless pit, and what does that pit contain? Evidently from a close study of the Book of Revelation, we find that the bottomless pit is a prison house of fallen, disembodied spirits or demons, and at once we wonder who these disembodied spirits are? When were they created, and why were they created? Why are they imprisoned? What were they in their original creation, and how did they fall, and why should they now be let loose on the earth when the Antichrist appears?

To answer these questions we must digress somewhat, and endeavour to make a reverent investigation with regard to the creation of the world, and things associated with that creation.

Was there a pre-Adamite earth?

Nearly every month now we are reading of scientists who are discovering remains of skulls and bones of both men and animals, that are evidently very ancient indeed, so ancient that they seem to prove that the world is much older than the Bible account at first sight seems to say it is. The question is, are the scientists right and the Bible wrong? or is the Bible right and the scientists wrong? There is no doubt that the Word of God and the works of God must harmonise the one with the other. There can be no conflict between the Bible and true Science. Modern science demands tens of thousands of years for the formation of the earth. We are told that it would take at least 1,200 years for the most luxurious vegetation of the present day to form a seam of coal six inches thick, or 7,200 years to create a seam three feet thick which is the finest seam that could be worked to advantage. Now, there are seams of coal to be found twenty to thirty-six feet thick; thus we see it must

have taken tens of thousands of years to form the coal beds of the earth alone. In the light of the developments of modern science and the discoveries of the modern geologist, how do their theories stand in the light of the truth of the Bible?

Let us turn to the opening verses of Genesis, and we read "In the beginning" that is to say the dateless past "God created the heavens and the earth." This statement covers the whole period of creation, the sun, the stars, the moon, as well as the earth. Our investigation at present is only with regard to the earth.

Now what kind of earth did God first create? What was it like? That which first came from His hands, was in all probability the most beautiful thing of all creation, covered with magnificent vegetation and inhabited by animal life, fish and fowl.

Now we turn to the second verse of Genesis i., where we read "The earth was waste and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (*R.V.*). This seems to suggest surely that the earth had undergone a great cataclysmic change. The face of the earth bears everywhere marks of sudden catastrophe. Is such a conjecture both scientifically possible and scripturally true?

With regard to the Scriptures. There are

several verses in both the Old and New Testaments which seem to imply that when God first created the earth, it came from His Hands in all perfection that we expect from the God of nature, and to support this, let us study Isaiah xlv. verse 18. "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, he is God that formed the earth and made it—he established it, he created it not a waste, he formed it to be inhabited" (*R.V.*). This is a remarkable statement, and supports the conjecture that this earth was in the first instance created absolutely perfect in the hands of God; therefore something must have happened to cause the earth to become without form and void. What was that thing? Let us look at another verse, Isaiah xxiv. 1: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof." Why did the Lord do this, and when? Is this statement more than figurative language? Or, turn again to Jeremiah iv. 23-26. "I beheld the earth and lo it was waste and void and the heavens they had no light. I beheld the mountains and lo they trembled and the hills moved to and fro. I beheld and lo there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld and lo the fruitful field was a wilderness and

the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord and before His fierce anger." When did all this happen? Was it in the dateless past or between the verses of Genesis i. 1 and Genesis i. 2? Why this terrific catastrophe to the earth? What was the cause of it? Why should the earth become void and waste, and the hills tremble and the mountains shake?

Now it is clear that sin existed before Adam and Eve, but who was the originator of sin and evil? How did sin and evil first start and why? Again we turn to Ezekiel xxviii, and other similar passages, and there we are told of a supernatural being who evidently was the highest archangel in glory, who lived in the very presence of God, and an account is given to us there of how he fell as a result of pride, for he wanted to be like God saying, "I will be like the most High" and because of his pride, and sin, judgment fell upon him, and the Bible tells us that this fallen being is none other than the Person whom we call Satan or the Devil.

Now the question is why should Satan have any dealings with men? What are we to Him, and what is this earth to Satan? Why should there be this tremendous spiritual conflict going on around us continually between God and the Devil, and good and evil?

We now turn to the New Testament for an explanation. Three times over in the Gospel of St. John our Lord calls Satan "the prince of this world" Why? St. Paul refers to him as "God of this age and of this world" Why? He is spoken of as if he were a dignitary to be reckoned with, a mighty spiritual potentate, of recognised influence, and power, and perhaps one of the most remarkable passages is to be found in St. Luke iv. in regard to the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, the man Christ Jesus. Why should the devil tempt the Man Christ Jesus? Why should he take our Lord and reveal to Him all the kingdoms and nations of this earth and the glory of them and say in St. Luke iv. 6. "All this power will I give thee and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me all shall be thine." Our Lord did not dispute with him as to his claims with regard to this world. Then why was the world given to Satan, and what right had he to offer this world, and the things and glory of it to the Lord Jesus Christ? By examining the Scriptures we are inclined to believe that when Satan was the highest archangel in heaven, he had authority over this earth and all that dwelt upon it, and when he revolted against

God, a certain number of the angels of heaven revolted with him, and in all probability here on this earth there were those who rallied to his standard and worshipped him as God. Then because of this great revolt Satan was cast out of God's presence —the fallen angels were judged and those who dwelt upon the pre-Adamite earth were banished and their disembodied spirits put into a place of detention, that is called in the Scripture "abyss" or "bottomless pit." This accounts for the fact that we are surrounded with what St. Paul calls in his Epistle to the Ephesians chapter vi, "Principalities and powers and world rulers of the darkness, and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places" (*R.V.*), and here on this earth is a terrific supernatural conflict being fought, between the powers of God and the powers of the devil, between good and evil, and everyone of us is implicated in this conflict.

The next question is, what is to be the end of this present conflict? Why is man in the very centre of this supernatural strife?

When the devil fell, if our interpretation is correct, his dominions were overthrown too, and that great judgment or catastrophe came upon the earth, but after judgment upon the devil and upon the earth, God restored

this earth to its present state as recorded in Genesis i. and ii.

After having recreated and restored the earth, He made an absolutely new creation in the form of man, and this creation was to be in closer relationship with God than the Devil once was in his former glory, for man was made "in the image of God and after His likeness" to be the bosom companion and friend of God for time and eternity, and God gave to man the dominion over this earth and authority that the Devil once held, and hence the animosity against man on the part of the Devil.

The Devil therefore has ever since sought to obtain his former dominion on this earth; to thwart God's plans for men and to seek to be worshipped as God. So the war is between God and the anti-God.

The Bible declares that this supernatural conflict is to come to a great climax, and we all of us must take our part in that crisis on one side or the other. This crisis is to be at the Second Advent or manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes to this earth to take possession and to establish His Kingdom upon this earth; but immediately before the Advent of Christ, evidently the Devil is to make his last bid to take possession of the world, to gain his former powers, and

to get men to worship him as God, and so he appears on this earth as man; and he undoubtedly will be a wonderful man of striking personality, and one of the first things he will do when he manifests himself is to seek to gain possession of those who once rallied to his standard on this earth in pre-Adamite days. A key is given to him of a bottomless pit, and he calls to his aid hosts of disembodied spirits, who will ascend from the pit and "cover the earth like smoke" Revelation ix. 2.

Now what does all this mean? St. Paul says in his first Epistle to Timothy, chapter iv. 1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons." That is to say, before the coming of Christ to this earth, there is going to be a period of Satanic delusion, backed up by miraculous power on his part and revelation of spirit forms and spirit powers.

Is it not really remarkable that spiritism has so developed during the past few years; how that even men and women who call themselves Christians are seeking on every hand to get into touch with the departed, and to create contact with disembodied spirits. Is it not remarkable how dis-

embodied spirits are seeking to take human form, and to reveal themselves as such? Is it not remarkable that practically all scientists deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, the fall of man, the Deity of the Lord Jesus, the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the personality of the devil, etc.?

Did not our Lord say in St. Matthew xxiv. "That as it was in the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man"? In those days there was great violence on the earth, the Lord God was forgotten, was despised, men just lived for themselves, careless of time or eternity.

Have we not many a picture both in the Old and New Testaments of a great revolt against God and His Christ, *e.g.*, in the Messianic Psalm—Psalm ii.—we have a picture of the kings of the earth, military leaders and nations in revolt against God, and His anointed Christ saying "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," and in the midst of that revolt we read of God decreeing "Yet have I set My king upon My holy hill of Zion and have given to Him the nations for His inheritance, of the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession," and when he takes possession we are told, that such will be the condition of the world that—"Thou shalt break them

with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel." Then again our Lord said in St. Matthew xxiv. 30, that when He comes " Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Why do the tribes of the earth mourn?

Revelation vi. 12-17 supplies the answer, which very clearly depicts the second Advent of Christ to this earth. In the closing verses the kings of the earth, and the princes and chief captains and the rich and the poor hide themselves in the rocks of the mountains and call upon the mountains and rocks to fall upon them and to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Why this fear? Is it not because of a great revolt which has been headed up by some Satanic power against God and His Christ? And as a result there comes this judgment upon them.

So, if our interpretation is correct, we are now fast approaching the greatest crisis in the history of the earth, if not in the history of all creation, viz:—The conflict between God and the devil, and here on this earth between

Christ and the Antichrist—between good and evil. It seems as if that prediction is now about to be fulfilled. On whose side are we? Do we belong to Christ or to the Antichrist? Remember the Scripture says in 1 John ii. 10, "He is the Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son" and St. Paul teaches us in 2 Thessalonians ii. 7, "For the mystery of iniquity (lawlessness) doth already work," which is to head up into a revolt of the man of sin—the lawless one "that he might be revealed in his own time."

Hence, there are two spirits at work to-day —the one called the spirit of the age—the spirit of the world, which is under the domination of the evil one—the spirit of the age is Anti-Christian, against God and His Christ.

Then there is the Spirit of God who is seeking to draw out from amongst the sons of men, people unto the Lord Jesus Christ, that they may yield hearts and lives to Him, and rally to His standard for truth and for righteousness.

Realising therefore the seriousness of the issues at stake, and the conflict with which we are surrounded shall we not lay ourselves absolutely at the Master's feet, and ask Him that in all we do and all we are, we may be filled with the Holy Spirit?

1 John v. 19, "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (*R.V.*) The word 'world' there means organised society, that is to say every man and woman who is not led and directed by the Spirit of God is led and dominated by the spirit of the age, which is of Satanic origin. Therefore, do we not see the need of being filled at all times with all the fulness of God, ever realising whose we are and whom we serve? Let us therefore "come out from among them and be separate."

This conflict is due to come to a head with the approach of the Lord Jesus "into the air," Who will gather to Himself all "the dead in Christ." "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to be for ever with the Lord." Are we ready for that day?

After which event we are told a key is given to Satan that he may rally to his standard all his forces, both on this earth, and in the bottomless pit for the great and final conflict, which is pictured for us in vivid prophetic language in Revelation xix. (verse 11), "I saw the heaven opened, I beheld and lo! a white horse and he that sat thereon called FAITHFUL and TRUE, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes are a flame of fire and upon His heart are many diadems, and He hath a name written which no one

knoweth but Himself. And He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with Blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses clothed in fine linen, white and pure." This is a picture of the Church of God, caught up to be with the Lord, enlisted in His army, coming with their Lord and Saviour for the great final issue (verse 15). "And out of His mouth proceeded a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron, He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. "And he hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written 'King of Kings, Lord of Lords'" (verse 16). "And I saw the beast (Antichrist) and the Kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against Him that sat upon the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image, they twain were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone and the rest were killed with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which

came forth out of His mouth and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

After this terrible conflict, Satan is bound and cast into the abyss which is shut and sealed over him in order that he should deceive the nations no more; and thus ends the great conflict. The devil is dethroned, the revolt against God and His Christ is ended, and 'the Kingdoms of this earth now become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ.'

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run."

"Thy Kingdom come O God,
Thy rule O Christ begin."

May this prayer be ours! May God give us grace to hasten this glorious consummation!

III

ISRAEL AND THE DISPERSION

History Written Beforehand

THERE are two chapters in the Bible that give a very clear, concise and vivid history of Israel. They are the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy and the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus. No stronger argument can be given to the infidel or sceptic than to urge them to consider carefully the prophecies of these two chapters. The argument for full divine inspiration is absolutely unanswerable. In the first fourteen verses of the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy blessings are promised to this race if they obey the voice of the Lord their God and do that which is right in His sight. But from the fifteenth verse to the end of the chapter—a long chapter of sixty-eight verses—there comes a series of curses if they disobey the voice of the Lord their God.

Verse 25.—"The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt . . . be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth."

Verse 37.—"And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all the peoples whither the Lord shall lead thee away."

Verse 41.—"Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine; for they shall go into captivity."

Verse 63.—"It shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest in to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and *there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot*: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: in the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

Fulfilled To-day

When speaking to a missionary in Russian Poland not long ago with regard to the Jews

in the Pale of Settlement, he said: "Do you know, the very words of the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy are literally fulfilled to-day? The Jews are going about in fear of their lives and at evening saying, Would God it were morning, and in the morning, Would God it were even."

In the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus there is another brief concise history of Israel. The first thirteen verses tell of promised blessing if they are obedient, but if not, from verse fourteen to the end of the chapter is a series of awful curses.

Verse 14.—"But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments . . . I will set my face against you, and ye shall be smitten before your enemies: they that hate you shall rule over you: and ye shall flee when none pursueth you."

Verse 31.—"I will make your cities a waste, and will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation. . . . And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you; and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste."

Verse 38.—"And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat

you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away . . . with them. And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me; and also that because they have walked contrary unto me, I also walked contrary unto them."

Verse 45.—"But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors"—after confession of their sins and iniquities and not before. The day is coming when this race is going to confess its iniquities (Zech. xii.), and after their confession God says: "Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob; and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land." Blessing to Abraham's seed means blessing to the land. Blessing to the land means blessing to the people. The two always go together in prophecy and should not be separated.

"And yet for all that"—(verse 44)—"when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God: but I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the Lord."

God True to His Covenant

Thus there is foretold in these two chapters the history of Israel in dispersion amongst the nations, and a very pathetic history it is. In the last part of the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus notice that this separation and dispersion amongst the nations is not to be final. God will remember those unconditional promises which He gave to Abraham : " I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." God will be true to His covenant, though the people were not true to their God. In God's wisdom and mercy the dispersion is to be only for a time. The final destiny of this race is yet to be fulfilled.

After the crucifixion of our blessed Lord, there came up to Jerusalem that great army from Rome, and during that terrible siege of A.D. 70 more than a million souls perished ; the whole of the people that were left in the land were then dispersed amongst all the nations. Very similar to the Babylonish siege, some hundreds of years before, when there was a first dispersion, so after the Jerusalem siege there was a second dispersion amongst the nations. To-day you will find Jews in India, Africa, China, Europe, Asia and all the lands of the earth, dispersed

amongst the nations, " scattered and peeled," " robbed and spoiled," despised and hated by nearly all people.

Signs of Times

During the past thirty years, however, remarkable changes have been coming over the land and over the people. Concerning which, we need to study very minutely and carefully.

In the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew our Lord is gathered with a few of His disciples on the Mount of Olives for a private talk, and an interesting question was put to Him—viz. " Tell us when shall these things be and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world ? "

An Important Question

Before going into that answer, or part of the answer, let us fully understand the question, for it is not as it seems to be at first sight. It is : " Tell us, when shall these things be ? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the consummation of the age ? " The word " world " in the Authorised Version does not mean the material world. There are three Greek words in this chapter, each being translated by the one word, " world," but having totally different meanings. The word " world" in this verse means aeon, age, epoch or dis-

pensation. It is most important to emphasise the fact that when Christ comes, the habitable world does not come to an end. Unfortunately there is a great deal of misconception about the coming again of the Lord. Many people imagine that, when He comes to this earth, the world is to be dissolved by fire. That final conflagration mentioned by St. Peter does not take place until after the millennium (2 Peter iii. 10). "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the consummation of the age?"

Now our Lord gave several signs. They may be summed up as follows:—

Signs amongst the Nations

Verses 6 and 7.—"Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass: but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of travail."

St. Luke xxi. 25-28.—"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring." (A possible reference to the peoples of the pifferent countries). "Men's hearts failing

them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

These prophecies of the Lord Jesus Christ have received a truly remarkable fulfilment since 1914.

1. Since then we have experienced *the worst war* the world has ever seen, costing over ten million lives, and over forty thousand million pounds.

2. *The worst earthquakes* known in human history, the one in China in December, 1920, which literally shook the globe, and carried suddenly into eternity at least a half a million lives. God's hand was surely clearly behind this earthquake ; for at that time there was being organised a great Moslem rebellion in China, and it is said that over ten thousand of the Moslem troops were swallowed up in one of the Kansu Valleys and one of its leaders with three hundred of his leading men were buried beneath the ruins of a Mosque. The official report gave the loss of life around the Ching-Ting-Choo district at three hundred thousand.

Then, there was another terrible earthquake in Kingston, Jamaica, and it is remarkable to note that a Christian worker once

said " I have worked in the slums of London, Glasgow, and other great cities, and I have never known such sin as there is in Kingston. I do not know how God withholds His judgments." Within two years of that utterance, Kingston was rocked and ruined in thirty seconds.

Then, there was the great earthquake in Japan when Tokyo, and Yokohama were laid in ruins in less than a few minutes, and hundreds of thousands perished. It is very striking that this series of earthquakes should follow the Great War. These things do not happen by mere coincidence. God is speaking solemnly to the sons of men that this dispensation is rapidly coming to a close.

3. *The two worst and greatest famines* in history occurred directly after the war, within a few months off each other. Here is a quotation from the " Times " of December 15th, 1920 :

" The population now totally destitute in Chihli is 6,000,000 ; in Shantung 2,500,000 ; in Honan 3,000,000 ; in Shen-si 1,000,000 ; in Shan-si 500,000. How many of these actually perished will never be known."

The Russian famine following six months later is said to be the greatest the world has ever seen. " In January, 1919, one thousand people were dying daily of starvation in

Petrograd." "The Times," January 15th, 1922. "Men and women die of hunger by hundreds every day in these cities." There is no doubt that in these famines unrecorded millions passed away.

4. *The worst pestilence* in some respects known to man, world-wide in extent, and exacting a toll of fully 12,000,000 lives, and quite 6,000,000 died in South Africa; which total exceeded the combined mortality of three wars; and in India in three months time quite 5,000,000 deaths occurred.

In December, 1918, the Medical Correspondent of "The Times" said: "Six million persons have perished of influenza and pneumonia during the past twelve weeks. Business has been interfered with in every country in the world, enormous losses in trade have been suffered. This plague is five times more deadly than war, and never since the 'black death' has such a plague swept the face of the world. It broke out in a mysterious way in ships two thousand miles from land, and no country in the world succeeded in eluding its grip." "In South Africa it took a toll of human life greater than three wars had done" ("Times," February 21st, 1919). "In India nearly 5,000,000 deaths occurred within a few months whole villages being wiped out" ("Times"

August 13th, 1922), and the total world mortality was no less than 12,000,000."

"This epidemic," said the Sanitary Commissioner for India, "is in many respects without parallel in the history of disease." It is extraordinarily significant that this influenza epidemic fell mainly on the aged and youthful, thus devastating all of military age, from eighteen to forty-five. *Is it not significant that these judgments in their worst form occurred in the same decade?* St. Matthew xxiv, verses 6-8. "All these" said Christ, "are the beginning of sorrows, and the end is not yet." If they are only the beginning, what yet must lie ahead, but great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world or ever shall be.

Surely, our Lord is speaking to the consciences of men as never before, and the Church does not realise the situation. It should be prostrate on its face before God, so acute is the crisis and so awful and imminent the danger.

On the top of these remarkable fulfilled predictions, do we realise that in 1914, there were forty-one royal dynasties in the world, and in seven years twenty-four thrones, including three of the greatest Empires in the world collapsed, and to-day there are only seventeen royal dynasties left?

Is not this a fulfilment of Ezekiel xxi. 26? "Thus saith the Lord, remove the diadem, and take off the crown, exalt him that is low" (Democracy and Bolshevism) "abase him that is high" (aristocracy) "I will overturn, overturn until he comes whose right it is (to give) and I will give it him."

Truly, thinking "men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after these things which are coming on the earth."

In the light of these events, what should our attitude be? "When these things begin to come to pass" saith the Master, "then look up, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Signs in Christendom

St. Matt. xxiv. 11.—"Many false prophets for false teachers, shall arise, and shall lead many astray," as the Revised Version has it. "And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold." Lawlessness is what "iniquity" means in the Greek. Lawlessness is abounding to-day in every phase of social, political and religious life in all parts of the world. There is lawlessness in the Church and out of the Church, in society and out of society. It is an age of increasing lawlessness. Was there ever an age in the history of the Church of God when there was so much false teaching

within the Church or within Christendom as to-day?

Signs amongst the Heathen

Then there is another striking sign, having both its prophetic significance, and also having its spiritual significance for this age. Verse 14. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world." Here we get the Greek word for "inhabited world," not the same "world" as in the third verse. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." It is very striking to notice that alongside the apostasy from the faith which our Lord predicts as the result of false teaching there is to be an increase in missionary activity. There never was a time possibly in the history of the Church of God since the day of Pentecost when so much was being done for missionary enterprise as to-day. There are places where thirty years ago you could have counted on your fingers the number of Christians, as in the heart of Africa, Uganda, parts of India, the heart of China, Manchuria and Korea. To-day Christians are numbered by their tens of thousands and in some cases by hundreds of thousands. So missionary enterprise is developing, and the Gospel is being preached

as a witness to the heathen. The word "heathen" and the word "nations" are exactly the same. "Then shall the end come," is the solemn warning.

Signs amongst the Jews

Verse 32.—"Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh: even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that He is nigh, even at the doors." The translation will very well bear "He is nigh, even at the doors." (*R.V.*).

To whom does this parable refer? At first sight to our Western eyes it seems to have absolutely no connexion whatever with the question or the answer; but those disciples thoroughly understood the parable, for the Jews had three great national symbols. "A *vine* hast Thou brought out of Egypt"—*i.e.* the Children of Israel in the Old Testament dispensation. We know how the Heavenly Husbandman looked after that vine, but it brought forth nothing but wild grapes. In this dispensation the Jewish race is seen under another symbol, *a fig-tree*, desolate and cursed. In the next dispensation they are seen under yet another symbol—viz. that of *the olive-tree*, the most fruitful of all trees, which is to grow

and fill the whole world with fruit unto the glory and praise of God. Here, then, in St. Matthew xxiv., the Jewish nation is spoken of under the barren fig-tree symbol. For nineteen centuries that has been their sad condition. Now our Lord says: "When you see life appearing in that barren fig-tree He is nigh, even at the doors." The barren fig-tree, however, is showing remarkable signs of awakening to life to-day—*e.g.* (*a*) an intellectual awakening; (*b*) a social awakening; (*c*) a national awakening.

Intellectual Awakening

There never was a time in the history of modern missions to Jews, now over a hundred years old, like the present. Take Russia and Poland, with its six million Jews. For over ninety years the London Jews' Society has had a mission there, and during the whole of that period the Society had been face to face with, as it were, a blank wall of opposition, and has scarcely been able to penetrate it at all. The Jews have hated the very name of Jesus Christ. Whenever it was mentioned they would curse and blaspheme. For the Jews of the east of Europe only know our Lord as depicted by those two perverted Churches of Greece and Rome. The so-called Christians belonging to those Churches hate

the Jews, and have been instrumental in stirring up such animus against them that the Russians and Poles from time to time have sought to almost annihilate them. Those terrible pogroms of a few years ago can never be forgotten, when nearly 100,000 Jews were massacred, nor the terrible "blood accusation" trials that have been brought against the Jews. It is no wonder the Jews hate Christianity and the name of our blessed Lord, for they have only known the Christ of a perverted Christendom in the east of Europe. But just recently amazing developments have been seen in a kind of spiritual, or perhaps it may better be described as an intellectual, upheaval running through the whole of those thirteen million people, a longing desire to know what is truth and to know God. The Edinburgh Conference was quite right a few years ago when it enunciated the fact that "now"—and it emphasised that word "nowo —"Now is the time to take the Gospel t" the Jews."

Failure of Judaism

Judaism has nothing like the hold over the younger Jewry that it used to have, and as a religion is beginning to show signs of breaking up. The leading Jews to-day are distressed because of the large numbers of the younger

Jewry that are not going to the synagogue. There was never a time like the present for missions to Jews. On all sides, in all mission stations, missionaries report of unprecedented opportunities, numbers of inquirers, more baptisms. Were the means provided, especially in Poland, for sending colporteurs and opening up medical missions, it is possible to gather in a large number of Jewish souls into the Church of God. Would to God that the Christians in the homelands realised the issues at stake! Thousands of young Jews are awakening out of the long sleep of Judaism. To whom shall they go? Infidelity, scepticism, agnosticism or into the true Church of God? The answer greatly depends upon the response of Christians at the Home Base. "The brethren of our Lord according to the flesh" are in spiritual need, and if only individual Christians realised their duty they would see to it that the Gospel as it is in Christ Jesus should be presented to them in its simplicity and truth.

Social Awakening

Fifty years ago England gave political emancipation to the Jewish race, and as a result of that act we have been proud to acknowledge that many a Jew has become a great Englishman, like Lord Beaconsfield,

Prime Minister, a Christian Jew, or Lord Herschell, Lord Chancellor, who was also a Christian Jew. But, to come down to modern days, to show the influence of the Jew in Christendom to-day—not Christian Jews, but Jews generally—in our own Government, helping to govern this vast British Empire, there are and have been in recent years many Jews by faith. One person out of every five of the population of New York is a Jew. Practically the whole of the teaching profession in New York is in Jewish hands; for the teaching profession there is opened up to competitive examinations; and the Jews, being a long way ahead intellectually of most people, enter for the examinations and attain the highest places easily. It is a remarkable fact that some seventy per cent. of the professors of the universities in the west of Europe, not counting Great Britain, are of Jewish extraction. A great number of the teachers of the west of Europe, the leaders of intellectual thought, are Jews. A Jew has been Viceroy of India, Mayor of Rome and another the Prime Minister of Italy—of all places, Rome and Italy!

Now what does all this mean? Fifty years ago people said: "Jews? Have no dealings with the Jews, the dirty Jews!" To-day we see a revival or an awakening of Jewish mind

and thought which is influencing the whole of Christendom. The two million educated Jews are exercising a social and intellectual influence in the world such as they have never done before.

A Stumbling-Block

We cannot get away from the fact that God has said that until the restoration of these people to their own land and to their God they are to be a stumbling-block amongst the nations. Do we realise what it means for Jews, to come to the fore as they are coming to-day and how it will affect the whole of Christendom? There are two vast movements in Christendom which are destined to do untold harm, and the Jews to a large extent have helped to influence those movements. Were there no command whatever in our Scriptures to take the Gospel " to the Jew first," we as Christians who love our God and love the Word of God should see to it that these people, with their marvellous gifts and great abilities, should have the simplicity of the Gospel presented to them.

Agnostic Socialism

Some few years ago there were two Jews who gave up their religion, for it did not satisfy the cravings of their hearts. They would have

nothing whatever to do with the perverted Christianity of the Continent, the Greek or the Roman Church. They therefore evolved what at first sight seemed to be a splendid heavenly idea, but did not realise that to carry out that heavenly idea there must be a heavenly people or rather a heavenly disposed people. Those two men were Karl Marx and Lassalle, the two great classical authors of present-day agnostic socialism. Not for one moment do we think that the Jews are responsible as a people for this movement, but it is surprising to notice the part individual Jews have and are taking in its organisation and development.

Now what is agnostic socialism? The present social movement which the above two Jews and others have helped to develop to a great extent during the last twenty or thirty years is a fact of world-wide importance. It bases its appeal on one of the most powerful motives of our fallen nature, covetousness. Its tenets, as we shall see, are quite incompatible with the Christian faith. The Alliance of the Social Democracy or International Working Men's Association tell us that their aim and endeavour is this: "We wish to destroy all states and all churches, with all their institutions and laws, religious, political, juridical, financial, magisterial, academical, economical and social; and to establish in

their places industrial co-operation and collective ownership of land and capital." Now, some millions of men belong to the International Working Men's Association. They have the vote, and they can carry it out. Listen to what Mr. Blatchford said: "To love each other as brothers and sisters and to love the earth as mother of us all, that is part of our new religion. Our new religion tears the old dogmas to tatters." Mr. Bernard Shaw says: "At present there is not a credible established religion in the world." The Anarchist Congress some years ago met in Geneva, and in a resolution they said: "Our enemy is every abstract authority, whether devil or good God, in the name of which priests have so long governed good souls."

Socialism and Lawlessness

Mr. Bradlaugh, in his famous debate with Mr. Hyndman in 1884, said: "Socialism denies individual private property and affirms that society organised as the State should own all wealth, direct all labours and compel the equal distribution of all produce." Agnostic socialism proposes to abolish marriage. As one of its leaders said the other day: "The woman has the same right to her body as the man. Man and woman must be absolutely free. A woman may have as many husbands

as she likes, and a man may have as many wives as he likes. Children will not belong to the parents. The State is to be the father and mother of us all."

World Corporation

Besides all this, agnostic socialism has just started a great enterprise, which is called "World Corporation." What is this World Corporation? As they say in their synopsis, it is "the birth of industrial science destined to combine education, industry and government throughout the world in one system, bringing all nations and all peoples into one complete body, possessing one corporate mind." Those who are studying the question of the coming Antichrist notice that statement. "World corporation," they say, "will displace all governments. Nations will be helpless in its grasp." And remember, those who have got the vote can rule those nations. "Absorbing, controlling and eventually directing industrial life, it will tear down the barriers of caste and nationality and combine in one brotherhood all the people of the earth for one common purpose." Such is the gigantic monster which was brought into being a few years ago in New York, and is to be developed by the Trade Unions of Christendom, who wish to bring about what they term

the world's millennium. Now, the remarkable thing in this movement of agnostic socialism is that it is surprising to see the number of educated Jews who are throwing all their intellect, aye, and money, into the movement, giving up Judaism and accepting this theory to solve the world's ills ; thus it is clear that intellectual Judaism is going to throw its force into the rise of anti-Christianity which is destined to consummate in the great Antichrist, who at the commencement of his career will receive support from nearly the whole of this race ; but, as will be seen later, to their own detriment.

The Jews and New Theology

Now, another movement which, if possible, is much more destructive than Socialism. In the latter part of the eighteenth century there arose a distinguished Jew named Moses Mendelsohn, who was the first reformed Jew, the first Sadducee of modern days. In the study of his life and his doctrines, rationalism in the realm of spiritual thought becomes evident. Following him were men like Heine, Spinosa, Renan, all of Jewish birth, who with the present-day German theology have influenced a great deal of the destructive theology of Christendom. To-day their thought and their books are permeating many of the

great theological colleges all the world over. The Jews as a race are in no way responsible for this destructive theology, but again intellectual Jews are helping on the movement to a great extent, as is seen in the tenets of Reformed Judaism.

New Theology

The Rev. R. J. Campbell has been looked upon as one of the present-day leaders of this New Theology. Mr. Blatchford says in his[1] standard work on this subject: "As an agnostic socialist I am naturally pleased with the book. Mr. Campbell is a Christian minister and I am an infidel editor, and the difference between his religion and mine is too small to argue about. Mr. Campbell rejects the doctrines of the Fall and the Atonement. He denies the divinity (or deity) of Christ, the Virgin Birth, and the Resurrection." Notice that, a Christian minister denies the deity of Christ, the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. "He denies the inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible, and he rejects the idea of divine punishment and everlasting hell. So do I. Mr. Campbell abandons the orthodox theory of sin, and says that selfishness is sin, and that unselfishness is morality and salvation. So do I." "Now, the Spirit

[1] Mr. Campbell has not withdrawn this book.

speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy."

Rationalism

These movements are developing within the Christian Church to an alarming extent. Our Bible is being attacked both by so-called friend and foe. We are told that the first five Books of Moses, Moses had nothing or scarcely anything to do with at all, being the production of the priests, after the post-exilic period. They have dared to deny the very Deity of our Lord. There is all the difference in the world between those two words, " deity " and " divinity." We hear a great deal to-day about the divinity of our Lord, but very little about the Deity of our Lord. We hear, too, a great deal about the divinity of humanity, but very little about the Deity of Christ. Now, to where is all this rationalistic drift bringing us? Materialism and rationalism are coming into the heart of the visible Church of God on earth, and there is rapidly coming into being a great common creed which seems destined to consummate up into one great anti-Christian system against God, and against the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. The old-fashioned Gospel, " Believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ and thou shalt be saved," is preached in very few pulpits to-day—very few, possibly the minority. The old-fashioned belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures in the theological colleges of the world is almost a thing of the past. Faith, and the miraculous, is being eliminated from the Scriptures, and the Christian Church is left, as a result, without any authority except the vague term, "scholarship is agreed"; which when inquired into has not a ghost of truth in it.

It is very striking to notice how the Jews are throwing their intellect and their abilities into this movement. In all the great cities of our land, on any Sunday afternoon, you may hear infidel and agnostic lecturers in parks and public places. On talking to them—and they are candid enough to tell you their history—you will find that a number of them were born Jews and have given up Judaism, and to-day are helping forward rationalistic thought. The Jews are coming to the fore in every phase of life, intellectual and social. We have seen in our own country and on the Continent the great Jewish thinkers of the world are influencing masses of people throughout Christendom. This social and intellectual awakening is comparatively modern and has occurred within the last thirty or forty years.

A National Awakening

A few years ago a remarkable man was raised up by God, named Dr. Herzl, who, seeing the distress of his brethren in almost every country determined, God helping him, that he would do something to ameliorate the condition of his brethren. He called together from all parts of the Jewish world delegates to meet him in Basle. They there enunciated the following four objects :—

(1) The promotion of the settlement in Palestine of Jewish agriculturists, handicraftsmen, industrialists and professional men.

(2) The federation and association of entire Jewry by means of local and general institutions conformably to the local laws.

(3) The strengthening of Jewish sentiment and national consciousness.

(4) The procuring of such Government sanctions as are necessary for achieving the object of Zionism.

Now, what is the main object of Zionism ? Palestine for the Jew. This national scheme is merely a political and not a religious movement. At this first Zionist Congress there were gathered together men of intellect, law, politics and finance. Seeing the distress of their brethren in almost every country they

determined on doing something to ameliorate their condition, and so they enunciated the Zionist programme, " Palestine for the Jew." That programme was at first ridiculed by practically all wealthy Jews. They said : " Turkey never will allow the Jews to go back to Palestine. The whole idea is Utopian and absolutely absurd." A large number of Christians took up the same attitude of unbelief in Zionism. But God has been overruling this movement ; not ruling it, but overruling it. And what has been the result of Zionism ? We go back to Jerusalem of fifty years ago. In that city then there were 24,000 people, and of those 4,000 were Jews. To-day in Jerusalem alone there are at least 80,000 people. Some authorities say that there are 100,000. It is very difficult to count them, but there are at any rate 80,000. We are well within the mark in saying that, of those 80,000 people, some 65,000 are Jews —that is to say, for the first time in nineteen centuries, and within the lifetime of the present generation, Jerusalem has become once again a Jewish city.

Palestine for the Jews

That little land of Palestine, until a few years ago, was barren and desolate, under the iron heel of the Turk, who allowed no progress

whatever. Even the trees were taxed from sixpence to half-a-crown a tree. It was a treeless land with a very small rainfall. But what do we see to-day? No fewer than forty agricultural colonies manned only by Jews, and the language spoken in those colonies the once dead language, Hebrew. In one colony, not the largest, the colony of Rishon le Zion, some millions of vine slips and thousands of trees have been planted. During the past ten or fifteen years the rainfall has more than doubled itself. The average Palestinian rainfall to-day is 652 millimetres. The rainfall in London is 529 millimetres; so the rainfall in Palestine is a little more than that of London to-day. The Zionist enterprise has some millions of pounds behind it. As the result of the eleventh Zionist Congress held not long ago it was decided to build a university in Jerusalem. The last congress voted £16,000 towards that university, and private individuals are said to be giving hundreds and thousands of pounds towards the same object. Now this University has been formally opened by the Right Hon. Earl Balfour.

The Promised Land

The question may be asked: "How can 15,000,000 Jews go to Palestine?" The Bible does not say that the Jews are to go back

to Palestine, but they are to return to their land—viz. the Promised Land. "Jehovah made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. xv. 18). The question is where the river of Egypt really is. Some imagine that it is the Nile. It may be, but that depends upon the meaning of the Hebrew. If it is Nahal, it would be the Nile. If it is Naha, then it would be the stream El Arish. At any rate, it covers a vast area now described as Syrian Desert in our maps. People say: "How can twelve millions live in a desert?" It is very striking to notice that the Turkish Government within recent years has been considering how they can best develop that country, so they employed a distinguished Englishman, Sir William Willcocks, who was largely instrumental in planning the development of Egypt in the first stage of its awakening. He went along all the Euphrates valley and the Tigris valley, and proposed several schemes. One was that the old canals along the Euphrates valley should again be cleared out and used for irrigation purposes. It is very remarkable to notice how the work of those engineers of some three or four thousand years ago still remains. Sir William advised the Turkish Government to

open up those old canals which once made the Babylonian and the Syrian empires so fertile. Agricultural experts state that this Syrian desert is not really a desert, but only deserted country, and with a small outlay may easily become one of the most fertile countries in the world. He also advised them to build a railway from the north of Syria to a place called Homs, north of the Euphrates valley, and then on to Hit and down to Bagdad, and, if possible, to the Persian Gulf. Already there is the German Bagdad Railway pushing its way through the Taurus to the north of Syria. There is the Damascus to Mecca railway from the north of Palestine down to Medina, now on its way to Mecca.

One Hundred Years Ago

Napoleon was an astute statesman, and he realised the strategic position of this part of the Turkish Empire ; he knew or foresaw that the power that held sway in that area held the key to the world's trade. On looking at a map of the world you will notice that the Promised Land seems to be as near as possible right in the centre of the world. The Jews have a tradition that their land is the centre of the world. If the present engineering contracts are fulfilled to time, we shall see remark-

able developments in this area in the near future.

What does all this mean? To what does it tend? Within a few years, if the present contracts are fulfilled, three great continents will be united by rail—Africa, Europe and Asia, the uniting point being within the Promised Land. No wonder that Napoleon, astute statesman as he was, realised the fact that if he could possess that area he would hold the key to the world's trade. But, fortunately, he was hindered by Great Britain from undertaking the task. He wanted to rebuild Babylon; the plans which he brought out for that purpose, it is said, are to be seen in Paris to-day.

[The following paragraph was written in March, 1914.]

Breaking up of Turkish Empire

Within the next few years a great deal of the world's trade will go by rail through the Promised Land! That means unprecedented prosperity. What will happen? Turkey is bankrupt. We have seen how a large portion of that great empire in Africa has been taken away by Italy. Tripoli is a far larger portion than people imagine. We see how Turkey is broken up in Europe and now holds only a very small area to what she formerly pos-

sessed, and is now surrounded by the great powers—England, Russia, Germany and France and the Jew, all interested in this area. Germany already has a number of colonies in Palestine and is seeking more. Certainly Russia is interested in developments there and in Turkey too. England has vested interests in Egypt; also around the Persian Gulf. Now, will Turkey be allowed to hold her sway over the Promised Land? One cannot speak dogmatically, but possibly not. When developments begin to increase, as they will within the next few years, either one of two things is likely to happen.[1] Either there will be a conference of the great powers, and they will put a buffer state in, possibly the Jews, and give them their own country, which they will develop along their own lines. The Jews are already returning to Palestine, and also going to the Promised Land. There are some 50,000 Jews in Bagdad.[1] Or, difficulties may arise amongst the great powers interested in this area as to who shall hold sway over this awakening land, consequently it is within the bounds of possibility we shall see one of the most fearful and awful wars that this world has ever experienced develop, and as a result the whole territorial

[1] This was written in the early months of 1914 before war broke out.

geography of Europe, Asia Minor and North Africa will be changed. We cannot foretell, at any rate, we cannot but ask the question, What do all the signs and accumulations of signs tend to? Where are we travelling on to? We have seen signs in the world, signs amongst the nations, signs in Christendom because of false teachers. We have seen the development of the missionary enterprise. We have seen this marvellous three-fold awakening of the Jews.

THE BALFOUR EDICT

On November 2nd, 1917, prophetic students as well as readers of the daily papers were thrilled at the following announcement, sent by the then Mr. Balfour to Lord Rothschild, the great representative of the Jews:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

The Significance of the Balfour Edict

During the year 536 B.C. there was another great war and the kingdom of Babylon was being shattered to pieces, and a new king came to the front and captured Babylon. The Jews had been scattered throughout Babylon and Assyria for seventy years, and no sooner did King Cyrus capture Palestine and take Jerusalem, then he issued an edict as follows :

" Thus saith Cyrus, King of Persia, the Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the Kingdoms of the earth ; and He hath charged me to build Him an house in Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people ; the Lord His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, and build the House of the Lord God of Israel " (Ezra i. 2 and 3).

Why should King Cyrus, having captured Palestine, be anxious to restore the Jews back again to the land ? We are told in the first chapter of the Book of Ezra that the Spirit of God stirred him up to do this. But why should the Spirit of God stir Cyrus to restore the Jews to the land ? Was it not that the Scriptures might be fulfilled ? And was it not to prepare the way for the first Advent of Christ ? The Jews had to return and be

established in Palestine after their first dispersion, to prepare the way for the first great Theophany, the manifestation of the Christ on the earth, "God manifest in the Flesh."

Is not the Spirit of God again now in our days moving amongst the nations as then? Is not the Jewish race a chosen race, Palestine a chosen country, Jerusalem a chosen city?

God in His Word has predicted that in the last days certain things must happen to Palestine, to the Jews, and to Jerusalem. Are not these things now coming to pass? Is it not significant that during the last war even before the city of Jerusalem was taken by our armies, the edict went forth that Great Britain was prepared to give facilities for the Jews to be restored to their own land?

But why, after nineteen centuries of dispersion should the Jews be restored to their country? Why, in spite of opposition since 1917, should the League of Nations ratify the action of Great Britain? Is it not because God is preparing the way for another great event; an event which is going to affect the whole history of the world, a new and wonderful revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, at His Second Advent?

According to the prophetic Scriptures, the Lord Jesus cannot come unless the Jews are restored to their land and are dwelling in that

land. When He comes, Zechariah tells us (xii. 10), "They are to look unto Me Whom they have pierced, and mourn for their sins." And after days of mourning and affliction this race is to be transformed and become all-righteous and fulfil the great function for which God has preserved them throughout all the past ages.

The signs of the times, the fulfilment of the predictions, the restoration of the Jews to the land, and the awakening of the Near East, all tell us that God is about to do a new thing on the earth.

What does it all mean?

Is not our God speaking as solemnly as he possibly can to us Christians: "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him"? "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory" (Ps. cii.). When our Lord first came to Zion He came in His humanity.

Zion is possibly larger to-day than it ever has been in all its history. Zion is being rebuilt. "The Lord shall appear in His glory."

Now, dear friends, what manner of people ought we to be as we realise these things? "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man." It may be in our lifetime that He will come in the air, and we shall be caught up to meet Him

in the air and so be for ever with the Lord.

The most important question for each of us to consider and answer is—am I ready to meet Him?

There is only one way to be ready. If there is one who has never yet from his heart or her heart cried some such prayer as, "Lord I have sinned, cleanse me in Thy precious blood," then that soul is not prepared for that day. Unless the soul is sheltered under the precious blood of Jesus Christ, we are not ready to meet our God.

Dear Christian friends, what manner of people ought we to be? Oh, let us see to it that, as we see the signs of the times coming to a consummation, we recognise by these signs that the Lord is speaking to us and that "He is near, even at the doors," shall we not come in fresh consecration to our Lord and pray that prayer:

> "Take my life and let it be
> Consecrated, Lord, to Thee"—

time, talents, money, just placed at the Master's disposal to be occupied for Him till He come?

IV

THE ISRAEL OF GOD AND THE WILES OF THE DEVIL

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil" (Eph. vi. 11).

THE question is often being asked, "Why is it there is so little blessing in the Church of God to-day? Why is it that young people, especially, are not attracted? And why is it that the Church seems to have lost its hold over the people of the country?" All thinking Church people are conscious that there is something wrong within; there *is* a spiritual famine, and the world is conscious of it, if individual members are not.

As we compare the present state of affairs with that of the days of Pentecost, we cannot but ask the question, "Where is that enthusiasm that indicates earnestness, that spirit of love, that deep self-abasing humility, that passions for souls which animated the Christians of the early days?"

There are several causes of the spiritual famine around us, but I want to deal with

one which possibly is not thought of by the majority who are thinking about this question, and that is, *the under-estimation of the existence of the power of the Devil and his angels.*

I am dealing, I know, with a difficult subject, and am therefore anxious to impress upon you that I am not now expounding my own views, but the distinct teaching of the Word of God on this matter.

The Position and Offices of the Devil

(a) "*Exalted*": We read in Jude ix. (*R.V.*): "Michael the archangel, when contending with the Devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing judgment, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

These words seem to imply that the Devil was more exalted than even Michael the archangel himself.

(b) "*A Prince.*" Our Lord, three times over, designates him as "prince of this world": St. John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11. In Ephesians ii. 2, St. Paul calls him "the prince of the power of the air"; and in 2 Cor. iv. 4, "god of this age" (*R.V.*).

Super-Human Power

The Bible therefore distinctly teaches that the Devil has the greatest power on this

earth next to God Himself, being superhuman,—unseen, and a spirit is naturally of far greater power than flesh and blood.

(a) *Unseen Powers.* It is not generally understood that the Devil has under him, and at his disposal (according to Eph. vi. 11), beings so great in authority and dignity as to be spoken of as the principalities and powers, the world rulers, spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies. Therefore the conflict that the Church has on hand is simply terrific ; all the more so as the powers arrayed against us are unseen and supernatural. This combination of evil spirits and hosts of wickedness are united to oppose the preaching and proclaiming of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and the exposition of the Word of God, and are doing all in their power to prevent the Lord being exalted and the Bible being implicitly trusted. We never go to Church, or hold a meeting, kneel down to pray, or do any work for Christ, but that these hosts of hell are seeking to hinder the Spirit of God having His way with us.

(b) *Organised society.* May I emphasise again that I am not now expounding my own views, but just simply interpreting the Word of God. One of the most astounding statements in the whole of the New Testament is

to be found in 1 John v. 19, where St. John says: "We know that we are of God, and *the whole world lieth in the Evil One.*" What does St. John mean by that? The "world" does not mean the inhabited earth; for we read in St. John xvii. 14 that our Lord, in His prayer, said, "the world hated them, because they are not of the world"; and in verse 15, "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them from the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the Evil One." Evidently the word "world" here, both in the Greek as well as in the mind of our Lord and in the mind of St. John, referred to the whole of organised society, animated and guided by the spirit of this age, controlled, directed, and possessed by the Evil One.

Now I know that this is a very strong statement, but what else can it mean? Therefore, our preaching and witness and efforts are of very little avail unless we realise the fact that the Devil with whom we have to deal is a mighty reality, and that he has at his disposal unseen powers doing his behests.

Now, it is no easy matter to attack this great satanic organisation, and before doing so, we need to count the cost, and realise what we are doing, our absolute insufficiency in ourselves to cope with the powers of hell

arrayed against us, and also we must respect the powers of the enemy.

The Devil's Cunning

So powerful and cunning is our great adversary, that if we servants of Christ get slack in prayer for a day, and lay aside ever so little the armour of God, even for one moment, it is certain we shall be tripped up during that day; and unless we "fight the good fight" by feeding on the Word of God, and by communion with the Lord Jesus, and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so marvellously cunning is the Devil that he can, even to the experienced Christian worker, transform himself into an "angel of light." The Devil is never more dangerous or more subtle than when he gets into the pulpit to teach, or into the professor's chair to lecture and expound the doctrines of Christianity. He quotes and misquotes the Word of God to strengthen his theories and support his claims. The results to-day are very evident in that we see every fundamental of the Christian faith attacked by the theological leaders and teachers of our day. The Deity of our Lord is brought into question; the Virgin Birth is disbelieved by some; the full inspiration of the Scriptures is questioned; the Personal Second Coming of our Lord Jesus is either

questioned or spiritualised away; and students in our colleges and many of the congregations of our churches are led to believe that the Bible is not altogether reliable, and a spirit of mistrust is engendered. If there is one class of persons the Devil and his hosts are determined to get hold of, it is the ministers, clergy, and Christian workers.

Malignity of the Devil

Do we realise its force? Listen to St. Paul in 2 Cor. iv. 4: "The god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ . . . should not dawn upon them."

St. Luke viii. 12: "Those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the Devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, *that they may not believe and be saved.*"

1 Peter v. 8: "The Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

The Devil is a personality and a tremendous force in the world. There is no moment when he is not at work; no man, woman, or child upon whom he does not exercise his wiles; he is constantly laying snares to entrap men, especially those who are inclined to yield hearts and lives to God. For example:

(a) Acts v. 3: "Ananias, why hath Satan

filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost ? "

(b) John xiii. 2 : " During supper, the Devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him."

(c) Matt. xiii. 38, 39 : The Parable of the Tares : " The enemy that sowed them is the Devil."

Here in this parable our Lord distinctly teaches us that alongside the believing Christians there are those so like Christians —the tares—that it is impossible to distinguish between the tares and the wheat. They live very like Christians ; outwardly they seem the same, often teach the same doctrines which the Devil is travestying as the work of the Holy Spirit ; and it will not be till the great harvest day that the tares will be separated from the wheat. I know some will think my statements very uncharitable, but do let us remember that St. Paul distinctly teaches us in 2 Cor. xi. 14, 15 : " Satan is transformed into an angel of light ; therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works." Therefore, there are those in the Churches to-day who seem to be ministers of righteousness, but who I grant, possibly unconscious to themselves, are really emissaries of the Devil, deceiving even the

very elect by their supposed holiness, righteousness, goodness, and learning.

Remember, this is the Word of God, and not my interpretation ; therefore we should be all the more careful.

(d) Zech. iii. 1 : " He showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and *Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.*"

(e) 1 Thess. ii. 18 (*R.V.*) : " Satan hindered us."

(f) St. Luke, xxii. 31 (*R.V.*) : " Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."

And St. Peter's conclusion in 1 Peter v. 8, where we read : " Be sober, be watchful, for your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

Conclusions

We are distinctly taught that the Devil is

(1) An awful power and a tremendous personality ;

(2) Mighty in operation ;

(3) Skilful in strategy ;

(4) Malignant in design ;

(5) The special objects of his wiles are Christ's ministers and servants.

Our Duty

Let us remember that our Lord was manifested that, "He might destroy the works of the Devil."

Jas. iv. 7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God; *resist the Devil* and he will flee from you."

Eph. vi. 11: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil."

The Devil is a conquered foe; his days are numbered.

Rev. xx. 10. "The Devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone."

A terrible conflict is now being waged between good and evil, between God and the Devil, and every one of us, whether consciously or unconsciously, is taking part in that conflict. The Devil is blinding the eyes of millions to the glory of God and Jesus Christ, and his one endeavour is to thwart God and drag souls down into hell.

As we finish this study, a very solemn conclusion is forced upon us. The whole of mankind is divided into two classes:

(1) Those born in sin and living in sin, who are directed and controlled by the spirit of the world, and are at the mercy of the devil and his hosts of wickedness;

(2) Another great company, though born

in sin, who have since yielded hearts and lives to the Lord Jesus, have been cleansed in His precious Blood, born of the Spirit, yielded to God, and are led and controlled by the Spirit of God.

To which class do you belong? May I appeal to you, realising the seriousness of life and the responsibility of the knowledge you have, that you come to Him Who alone can deliver you from the wiles and machinations of the Devil, and yield your heart's allegiance to Him, and your lives —spirits, souls, and bodies—into His keeping, to be kept by His power from the Evil One.

V

"ISRAEL, AND THE SET FEASTS OF JEHOVAH"

Divine Programmes

The Bible is indeed a wonderful Book, in which we have revealed to us God's plan for the world, for the nations, for the Jews, and for the Church of God, from the beginning of time to the end of time.

It is God's purpose to bless the world with Divine blessing, and in Leviticus xxiii. we have redemption foreshadowed in the Jewish plan. In Daniel ii. and vii. we have God's plan for the nations revealed in the times of the Gentiles, and in St. Matthew xiii. we have God's plan in the form of seven parables of the Kingdom of Heaven; and in Revelation ii. and iii. we have God's plan for the Church militant here on earth. But of all these Divine programmes, that which is given to us in Leviticus xxiii. is fundamental.

There are seven set Feasts of Jehovah, viz., the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Sheaf of First-fruits, Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles.

These God-planned Feasts are appointed

for the purpose of public and united worship, and all of them are both typical and prophetical of God's plan for world redemption.

1. The Feast of Passover

Leviticus xxiii. vs. 4 and 5.—

"These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocation, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover."

This feast is a memorial feast, and emphasises redemption, upon which all blessing rests. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Details with regard to this feast are laid down in Exodus xii. The story is well known: the children of Israel were then a nation of slaves in the land of Egypt, under hard taskmasters, suffering at the hands of Pharaoh and his officers. Egypt was therefore under condemnation, the judgment of God was about to fall upon the whole land, and as always, when God is about to judge people, He always forewarns, and at the same time provides a way of escape. Consequently, for those who would be delivered from the wrath of God, certain regulations were laid down.

1. On the tenth day of Nisan, a pure spotless lamb was to be chosen, a lamb for an "house." This lamb was to be taken to each home and kept "until the fourteenth

day of the same month" (Exod. xii. 6). On the fourteenth day the lamb was sacrificed and the blood was personally applied to lintels and door-posts of each house (Exod. xii. 13). 'The blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you." All this is typical of the spiritual condition of the world. The whole world, like Egypt, is under condemnation, "for all have sinned and come short in the glory of God." Our Lord very clearly and emphatically states in St. John iii. 36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." That is to say, the wrath of God is abiding on the world, and the day is coming when this world must be judged. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." God in His love and mercy has provided for mankind a way of escape, and it is remarkable to see how the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, fulfilled every detail of the regulations laid down for the Passover Lamb in Egypt—e.g., on the tenth day of Nisan, Palm Sunday, the Lord Jesus came from the village of Bethany on His way into Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives, and there met Him on His way down the Mount crowds of Jewish people with palms in their hands,

crying " Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord." " Hosanna to the Son of David." Little did the Jews realise that that day they were receiving the Lord Jesus as the Lamb of God, their Paschal Lamb. Our Lord spent the whole week until the fourteenth day in Jerusalem. On the fourteenth day the Paschal lambs were taken to the Temple area to be examined by the Priests and the Levites, for that which the Jew offered to God had to be without blemish and without spot, and publicly declared so.

Whilst the Paschal lambs were thus being examined by the Temple officers, our Lord as Lamb of God was being examined by temporal officers, Pontius Pilate and Herod. Three times Pontius Pilate declares our Lord to be faultless and spotless. " I find no fault in Him." Again at the same time, when the Passover lambs were sacrificed, our Lord was sacrificed on Calvary as our Passover.

In the days of Egypt, would a man be delivered from condemnation, the only means was, by personally applying the blood of the Paschal Lamb to the door-posts and lintels of the house. To-day, would a man be delivered from the wrath of God, and from Divine Judgment, the only way is for each sinner individually to personally apply the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, to

his own heart and conscience, and as in the days of old the avenging angel said, "When I see the blood I will pass over you," so in the days of judgment to come, those only will be saved who are sprinkled by the Blood of Jesus Christ. "It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul" (Lev. xvii. 11). "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22). "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i.).

2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus xxiii. vs. 6-8:

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: and seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.

In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: Ye shall do no servile work therein.

But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein."

Alas, the significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is not understood by the large majority of Christians. The rules and regulations for this feast are laid down in Exodus xii. vs. 14-51, the main clauses of which are:—

1. "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread."
2. "Ye shall put away leaven out of your houses."
3. "Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

To this day, the Jews keep this feast most rigorously; consequently just before the Passover and feast of unleavened bread, the head of a Jewish house, with a light in one hand and a brush in the other, searches not only every room of his house, but every cupboard and every drawer; there is no part of the house left out. He often causes his children to be lined up, and their pockets are gone through lest leaven should be found, for "whosoever eateth that which is leaven shall be cut off from Israel"; and in Exodus xii. 19: "Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses."

Consequently, the Jew goes through two ceremonies, the one called Bedigath-chametz, the searching for leaven, and leaven is always found with a view to the next ceremony Bi-oor chametz, the purging of leaven, purging is always by fire. The slightest speck of leaven would render a house unclean, and prevent its inmates from holding communion and fellowship with God.

Now, in Scripture and amongst the Jews, leaven is always a type of evil. Leaven is a microscopic element with remarkable powers of diffusiveness.

We will go to Egypt and try and visualise this feast. On the fourteenth day of Nisan at evening the avenging angel passes over

the land, and only those who are behind blood-sprinkled doors are safe. Let us therefore go inside the house of those protected by the blood, and we shall find the whole family in the day of judgment feasting on their Saviour the lamb; and in all their feasting there must be no leaven partaken of. The keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread typifies in a remarkable way the saved man feasting on Christ, the Paschal Lamb. No Christian can possibly rejoice before the Lord, if sin is compromised with or condoned in his life. Holy Communion cannot be held with a living Saviour, the Lamb of God, whilst sin is either on the conscience or in the life.

Notice the position in the Feast of Unleavened Bread—

1. Communion always follows, never precedes, the Passover.
2. Israel saved by the blood is one thing, but Israel feasting on the Lamb their Saviour is quite another.
3. Israel saved from the wrath of God by the blood-sprinkled door is now feasting on the Saviour, and thus enjoying salvation.
4. In the Passover we see justification by faith, in the Feast of Unleavened Bread we get sanctification through faith.

Why is it amongst Christians to-day there are two distinct classes of people? There

are those, on the one hand, who are undoubtedly Christian and saved from the wrath of God; they are going to heaven because they realise the Lord Jesus is their Sin-bearer and Saviour. They have a real and living faith in His Atoning Sacrifice as the Lamb of God, but somehow or other when we come into touch with them, they are not living the Christian life. They are not really happy in His service, times without number there seems to be predominant in their lives jealousy, pride, anger, and temper. Yes, they are saved, but not enjoying their salvation. They are delivered from the wrath of God, and from the bondage of sin, for which Egypt stands, and yet they are long-faced, unhappy, dissatisfied, often very disappointed and defeated in the Christian life. Is this the Will of God for us? "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice."

One of the great predominant characteristics of every Christian life should be joy. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Now it is clean hands and a pure heart that makes a rejoicing Christian.

Leaven is anything in the Christian life and conduct that is not of faith. Behind all

our failures and dissatisfactions there is root cause for the sins of a Christian. Leaven being a type of the " old man," our depraved and fallen twisted nature. We were born in sin, the children of Adam, and as such we possess a fallen nature in which evil is ever present. When the Lamb of God was sacrificed on Calvary, He not only died for us as our Sin Bearer, but we read in Romans vi. v. 6, " Knowing this, that our old man (human nature with its tendency to evil) was crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed (done away with), that henceforth we should not serve sin " ; v. 14, " For sin shall not have dominion over you."

A tiny speck of leaven, of the " old man " renders a man unclean and hinders us rejoicing in our Saviour. David realised this when he cried in anguish of soul, " Create in me a clean heart, O God." We often sing—

" Oh ! for a heart to praise my God,
A heart from sin set free ;
A heart that's sprinkled with the Blood
So freely shed for me.

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
My great Redeemer's throne :
Where only Christ is heard to speak
Where Jesus reigns alone."

Is it possible for us to be unleavened in heart ? Yes, in the same way as the Jew rids his house of leaven, " Know ye not that your

bodies are the temples of the living God." God in His wonderful mercy has created us to be His abiding place, and has made our hearts to be His home, and God, the Holy Spirit therefore is the head of our houses, and if we open every drawer and cupboard of our lives, and ask Him to search us and take from us the leaven, He will search, and He will purify, He will purge from sin.

Our prayer should be :—

" Search me, O God ! My actions try,
And let my life appear
As seen by Thine all-searching Eye,
To mine, my ways make clear.

Throw light into the darkened cells,
Where passion reigns within ;
Quicken my conscience till it feels
The loathsomeness of sin."

Search all my thoughts, the secret springs,
The motives that control ;
The chambers where polluted things
Hold empire o'er the soul."

Our God is longing to thus search us, and it is only in this way that we can keep the seven days of perpetual feasting of unleavened bread, holding unhindered communion and fellowship with our God, and entering at the same time into something of that experience, which is depicted for us in the words of St. John : " Truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ " (1 John i.).

3. The Feast of the Sheaf of Firstfruits

Leviticus xxiii. vs. 9-11.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them. When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it."

Notice that the rules and regulations for this feast are, that the priest shall wave a sheaf of firstfruits of the harvest before Jehovah to be accepted on our behalf, and the day when he waves this sheaf before Jehovah is "the morrow after the sabbath."

Now, this is most important. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

On Good Friday, our Lord as "the corn of wheat" died, and was buried; the first great Easter morning, the "morrow after the Sabbath," our Lord as "the Sheaf of first-fruits" rose from the dead, and thus was waved before Jehovah to be accepted on our behalf. 1. Corinthians xv. 20-23: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep—Christ, the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's at his coming."

Little did the priest that day realise the

significance of what he was doing, when he waved the wheat sheaf before Jehovah. This wheat sheaf has its New Testament counterpart for us Christians. The feast was celebrated during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, therefore the Feast of First-fruits has some special significance for those who are living unleavened holy consistent Christian lives.

Our Lord as the waved Sheaf was accepted on our behalf; that is to say all the full benefits of His resurrection are ours.

Ephesians ii. v. 4, 5, and 6: "God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us. Even when we were dead in sins, *hath* quickened *us* together with Christ (by grace ye are saved). And *hath* raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Notice the words, "quickened together," "risen together," "seated together." Are we living this life glorious here on earth?

4. The Feast of Pentecost or Weeks

Leviticus xxiii. 15, 16, 17.

"And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord:

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour;

they shall be baken with leaven ; they are the firstfruits unto the Lord."

Of the seven feasts, there are three major Feasts, viz., the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The Feast of Passover prefigures the Israel dispensation, the Feast of Pentecost prefigures the Church dispensation, and the Feast of Tabernacles prefigures the millennium.

Notice the rules and regulations with regard to the Feast of Pentecost.

1. The first fruits of the wheat harvest were to be presented on the fiftieth day after the waving of the barley sheaf. Then, one sheaf was waved before Jehovah, but now in the Feast of Pentecost, not one sheaf but two, in the form of two loaves, afterwards to be the Priest's food. Consequently, there was to be leaven in the loaves.

2. Deuteronomy xvi. 9-12. Pentecost was to be a day of universal rejoicing before the Lord.

Of what do these rules and regulations typify ?

1. They do not appear to be typical of Christ, for then there would be no leaven.

2. For the same reason they would not apply to the Holy Spirit.

3. Therefore, they must typify something made from the wheat seed.

4. The two loaves, how did they come into being ?

On the day of Pentecost, when the Disciples were gathered together "with one accord in one place," the Spirit of God rested upon them," and kneaded and welded them all into one body, the Church of God. On that day three thousand souls were added to the Church.

5. Why two loaves? The Church consists now of two classes, viz., the Jew and the Gentile. Hitherto, God's purposes have been made known to the world through the Jew, but from the Day of Pentecost, God has brought in an elect number from amongst the Gentiles as well as an elect number from amongst the Jews.

6. Also, in the two loaves there is an element of corruption. The Church of God has been and still is polluted and defiled by the presence of self and sin.

7. But for all that, the two loaves are holy to the Lord, and are the first-fruits of a great harvest yet to come.

5. The Feast of Trumpets

Leviticus xxiii. vs. 23-25.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord."

Hitherto, in the first four feasts we have seen a literal and minute fulfilment of the rules and regulations laid down by Jehovah. The Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, are as yet unfulfilled, but surely, we are to expect as minute and literal a fulfilment of the last three Feasts, as we have seen of the fulfilment of the first four Feasts.

We also notice that the first four Feasts were always held in the Spring of the year, whilst, the last three Feasts are kept in the Autumn of the year, so there is a space of several months between the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets. This is significant.

The blowing of Trumpets to the children of Israel was a great institution, and the seventh month in which these three latter Feasts were held has always been a sacred month to the Jews, and called the " Sabbatic " month.

Throughout the prophetic and typical scriptures, a trumpet is always typical of the Voice of God. In Numbers x. 1-10 we have details with regard to the silver trumpets, which are typical of the Voice of God summoning His children to hear His Voice.

" In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation." (Lev. xxiii. v. 24).

The first day of the seventh month is the Jewish New Year's Day. Like the Church, the Jews have a civil and ecclesiastical year.

On the Jewish New Year's day—" Rosh-hoshanah,"—as soon as it commences in the early evening, the Jews gather together in their synagogues in large numbers, and no sooner are the trumpets blown, than there arises over the whole race, great fear, apprehension, and anxiety, for they believe, that at that moment, " The Book of Life," and " The Book of Death " are opened by God, and those souls who are destined to die during the coming year, have their names written in the Book of Death. The Book remains open until the Day of Atonement, " the Black Fast day," the tenth day of the seventh month, and it is possible during those ten days for names to be transferred from " The Book of Death," to " The Book of Life," and the method whereby transfers may be made from the " Book of Death " to the " Book of Life," is by acts of " Mitzvah " that is to say good actions, kind deeds.

Consequently, during those ten days, the Jews are most anxious to be kind to one another, giving gifts to poor relations, visiting the sick and liberally subscribing to different charities, hoping thereby that if their names should be in " The Book of Death," they

may be transferred to "The Book of Life."

Throughout these ten gloomy, dark days, the Jews are truly unhappy and miserable; not knowing where they stand in the sight of God, for once the sound of the Trumpet has been heard on New Year's Day, they know God is weighing in the balance their good deeds and their bad deeds, therefore they are days of fasting, and of trembling.

These days of fasting culminate in the Black Fast Day, on the Day of Atonement, when for twenty-four hours the Synagogues are filled with Jews and Jewesses. Nothing crosses their lips in the way of food or drink, and many a devout Jew with a whip in his hand will be afflicting himself because of sin and in fear of God.

Such is the method whereby the Jews to this day fulfil the rules and regulations laid down by Moses in connection with the Feast of Trumpets, and the Day of Atonement. But what is their spiritual and prophetical significance?

Now, it is very remarkable as one studies the prophetic scriptures to notice how often the Feast of Trumpets is referred to, e.g.

Isaiah xviii. v. 3: "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and *when he bloweth a trumpet*, hear

ye." Verse 7 : " In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of Hosts of a people scattered and peeled—unto Mount Zion."

It is therefore, at the Feast of the blowing of the Trumpet that the Jews are restored to their land. Isaiah xxvii. verse 13 : " It shall come to pass in that day (that is to say the Messianic day), that *the great trumpet* shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

Zechariah ix. verse 14 : " the Lord God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south." We notice therefore that these prophetic scriptures refer to Israel's redemption.

Joel ii. 1 : " Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble : for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand ; a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains."

Little do the Jews realise as they keep this Black Fast, it is ever an object lesson of things that are yet to happen when God once begins to restore His people to the land. The Jews are going back to Palestine, though in all

probability they are going back to days of darkness, of clouds and thick darkness.

So much for some predictions in the Old Testament with regard to the blowing of the Trumpets. Now let us look at St. Matthew xxiv. 30-31. You will remember how the Disciples had gathered together around our Master and they asked Him " What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the age ? " and our Lord in this chapter gives many indications and describes His coming, and He says, verse 29 : " Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon dim her light, then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and He shall send his angels with a great sound of a *trumpet*, and they shall gather together the elect (Israel) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Here again we see Israel being restored to their land at the sound of a trumpet.

There is however, another, and a much more thrilling significance for the Church of God in connection with the blowing of the Trumpets. Each time " the rapture of the saints " is referred to in the New Testament,

it is referred to in connection with the blowing of the Trumpets.

1 Corinthians xv. verses 51 and 52: "Behold, I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, *at the last trump*; for *the trumpet* shall *sound*, and the dead (in Christ) shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Notice it is at the *sound of the trumpet* the dead are raised.

1 Thessalonians iv. verses 15-18: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Again notice that "the dead in Christ" rise at the "*sound of the trumpet.*"

In Revelation, chapters ii. and iii. we have a vision of the Church militant here on earth, and in Revelation iv. and v. we have a vision of the Church triumphant in heaven. St. John who had visions of things to come said: "After this I looked, and behold a

door was opened in heaven ; and the first voice I heard was as it were of a *trumpet* talking with me which said, Come up hither " (Rev. iv. verse 1).

Speaking of the Second Advent of Christ, the seventh angel sounds with a trumpet a message. " Time (or delay) shall be no longer " (Rev. x. verse 6).

Revelation xi. verse 15 : " And the seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever," and we read at the same time in verse 18 " and the nations were angry."

Consequently, we notice three things about the sound of the Trumpet.

1. The Jews are restored to their land.

2. The Church is caught up.

3. The tribes of the earth mourn and are angry. The reason of their anger is that the " day of wrath is come " (Rev. xi. verse 18). It is an interesting fact that as at the first Advent of Christ " He came to His own and His own received Him not," so at His Second Advent, the world will not want Him, and He will judge the world before He establishes His kingdom here on earth.

6. The Day of Atonement.

Leviticus xxiii. vs. 26-29.

" And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of the seventh month there shall be a day of atonement : it shall be an holy convocation unto you ; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.

And ye shall do no work in that same day : for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God."

The tenth day of the seventh month is called by the Jews, the Black Fast Day, when they gather together in their synagogues for " affliction of soul " and they mourn for sin.

In the old dispensation, on this day the High Priest went alone into the Presence of God, having first divested himself of his garments of glory and beauty and offered atonement for himself and for all Israel. This day was kept as a day for one purpose only, viz., for mourning for sin, a day of affliction of soul.

The Feast of Trumpets and the succeeding black days foreshadow the days of trouble and tribulation which are to come to a climax when the day of Atonement is literally fulfilled as foreshadowed in Zechariah xii. 10 : " I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of supplications ; and they shall look

upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him." On that day the eyes of Israel will be opened to realise the tragedy of the Cross of Calvary, and they will see then that Jesus of Nazareth is the Paschal Lamb, Lamb of God, the Son of God they crucified and rejected—the Messiah. This will become a day of affliction of soul, such as they have never yet experienced in their spiritual history.

7 The Feast of Tabernacles.

Leviticus xxiii. verse 39 and following. This is the Feast of the ingathering of the harvest, and a memorial feast which was to be kept like that of the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. For this Feast of all Feasts, according to the rules and regulations laid down by Moses, the Jews lived in "Booths made of boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook." In the East end of London, as well as in Palestine the Jews endeavour to keep the rules with regard to this Feast.

The great feature of the Feast is: "Ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." In the old dispensation so grateful and thankful were the Jews that they could not offer God enough for all His goodness towards them; therefore throughout this week they

offered double offerings. Instead of seven lambs and one ram, it was fourteen lambs and two rams and a special thank-offering of seventy bullocks, fourteen on the first day, thirteen on the next day, twelve on the next, and so on throughout the week.

The Feast of Tabernacles is still yet to be kept in all the fulness of its typical significance.

The Jewish race will have their day of Affliction of Soul, on the great Day of Atonement, and afterwards on the fifteenth day of Nisan will come to the Lord their God with offerings of praise and thanksgiving, such as they have never done in all their history. It will seem as if they cannot offer God enough.

Zech. xii. 10 : " I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplications."

Zech. xiii. 1 : " In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.

Then will be wonderfully fulfilled Zech. xiv. 16. " And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles."

Isaiah xxvii. verse 6 : " Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

Isaiah 60 and 61. "Arise, shine for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee."

Verse 15: Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." Verse 21: "Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever." Isaiah lxi. verse 6: "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the Ministers of our God."

Psalm lxvii. "God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations. God shall bless us: and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him."

Notice that these passages refer to the coming future glory of Israel. In no place does the Bible teach that the Church is going to convert the world; (never mind what ecclesiastical and theological leaders may say), there is not one single sentence to support such a statement. Israel is chosen of God to be the means of world blessing. To Abraham God said: "In thee and thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Israel as a nation is to be a missionary nation to bring the world to God, and in the days of the millennium it will be their joy to go throughout the nations of the earth to influence men Godward and Heavenward, and to worship their King and Messiah, Who will be in some wonderful way manifest in Jerusalem. Then will Joel ii. verse 21 and following receive its full and glorious fulfilment—

Fear not, O Land,
Be glad and rejoice,
For Jehovah doeth great things . . .
Ye children of Zion, be glad and rejoice
In Jehovah your God,
For He giveth you the early rain in righteousness,
He causeth to descend for you the showers
The early and latter rain as before:
And the floors shall be full of corn,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil,
And I will restore to you the years which the canker hath eaten . . .
And it shall come to pass *afterwards*, I will pour out My spirit *upon all flesh* . . .
In those days will I pour out My spirit . . .
And it shall come to pass whosoever shall call on the name of *Jehovah* shall be saved. For in Mt. Zion and in *Jerusalem* shall *be deliverance.*

Thus we see the fulness of the glory of these set Feasts of Jehovah in all their typical and prophetical significance, and the whole world filled with the Glory of the Lord. The instrument in God's hands for world blessing being the seed of Abraham, the Jewish race.

VI

ISRAEL AND THE TRIBULATION

We now come to what is perhaps one of the most difficult of all subjects in dealing with the second coming of our Lord. Concerning this period there has been, and there still is, a great deal of controversy. Men of God, men of deep insight into the plans of God, and men who know the Scriptures, have diverse views as to what is the true interpretation of "the man of sin" and "the mystery of iniquity." Therefore, let us not approach this subject in any dogmatic way, but with an open mind and an open heart, willing to be led and taught of God.

The King of Babylon

A remarkable and mystic personality is often brought before us in the prophetic Scriptures under different titles, such as the King of Babylon, the Prince of Tyre, the Assyrian. A study of his history and personality is of the deepest importance. In Isaiah xiv. 1, 2, we read: "The Lord will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the stranger shall join himself with them, and

they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the peoples [or nations] shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them captive, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors." From those two verses we see in prophecy Israel is in their own land.

Now notice the following verses: "It shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow"—that is to say, in their land—"and from thy trouble and from the hard service wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this parable against the *king of Babylon* and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, the sceptre of the rulers; that smote the peoples in wrath with a continual stroke, that ruled the nations in anger, with a persecution that none restrained."

Has there ever been such a king as this "that ruled the nations in anger, with a persecution that none restrained?" The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell [or hades, or sheol] from beneath is

moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art *thou* also become weak as we? Art *thou* become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to hell, and the noise of thy viols."

Verse 12.—"How art *thou* fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thine heart" —now notice here is his characteristic coming out—"*I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God*; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the earth: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; *I will be like the Most High.*" Do not these words remind us of the "angel of light" who came with a message to our first parents, "Ye shall be as Gods." Ye shall be like God? "I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the uttermost parts of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, they shall consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his prisoners to their home?"

Has such a being ever existed in all the history of the world? "All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an abominable branch, clothed with the slain, that are thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under foot."

The Prince of Tyre

Now please turn to Ezekiel, the twenty-eighth chapter. We see again this same striking personality, but under another name, "The Prince of Tyre." "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre, Thus saith the Lord God: Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art man, and not God, though thou didst set thine heart as the heart of God: behold, thou art wiser than Daniel"—therefore a remarkable personality—"there is no secret that they can hide from thee"—such a man has never existed—"by thy wisdom and by thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches . . . and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches"—extremely wealthy—"therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because *thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God*; therefore

behold, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit; and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain, in the heart of the seas [or the people]. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, *I am God*? but thou art man, and not God, in the hand of him that woundeth thee. Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God."

Verse 12.—"Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God." Now notice again, here are similar characteristics to the King of Babylon. "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was in thee: in the day that thou wast created they were prepared. Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth: and I [God] set thee, so that thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways"—a perfect created being—" from the day that thou wast created, till unrighteousness was found in thee. By the multitude of thy traffic they filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned ; therefore have I cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God : and I have destroyed thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness : I have cast thee to the ground, I have laid thee before kings, that they may behold thee." The highest possible archangel in glory. " By the multitude of thine iniquities, in the unrighteousness of thy traffic, thou hast profaned thy sanctuaries ; therefore have I brought forth a fire from the midst of thee, it hath devoured thee, and I have turned thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the peoples shall be astonished at thee : thou art become a terror and thou shalt never be any more."

Now, has any such being as yet ever existed on the face of this earth ? Do any other Scriptures throw more light upon this personality ?

Daniel's Vision of an Anti-Christian Empire

Daniel also had a vision of this great personality who is to dominate this earth. "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it [Daniel had it revealed to him that "the beasts" were the great dominating world powers of Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece]; and it had ten horns [*i.e.* Kings or Kingdoms].

"I considered the horns and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots [*i.e.* three Kings or Kingdoms were demolished by the "little horn"]: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things" (Daniel vii. 7, 8).

We are not surprised to read that after this vision "Daniel was grieved" and the visions troubled him. Consequently, he asked for information as to what this strange vision might mean. "So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things" (vii. 16).

"Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall DEVOUR THE WHOLE EARTH, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns . . . are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. . . . As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me" (Daniel vii. 23-28).

Many since Daniel's time have also been troubled as to the interpretation of this difficult passage of Scripture. But, now, in these latter days God is enabling us to understand that in the near future we are likely to see set up a world-wide Anti-Christian Dominion. The world is fast approaching to this great climax, and is unconsciously making great strides towards this consummation. As we shall see, there is to be first an Antichrist and an Anti-Christian Empire before the Christ comes to set up His Millennial Empire.

The Man of Sin

Look at the second chapter of the second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Saint Paul in the third verse exhorts Christians: "Let no man beguile you in any wise; for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" —now notice the very same characteristics again—"he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, *setting himself forth as God.* Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness [or iniquity] doth already work: only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then"—and not till then—"shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of his coming; even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God

sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The Antichrist

One other passage, the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Revelation—a remarkable passage and a remarkable chapter. In this chapter is brought before us a trinity of evil, a travesty of the Blessed Trinity. We see the dragon, the first beast, and the second beast; the dragon the devil; the first beast the great political Antichrist; and the second beast, who is something like the anti-Holy Ghost, or ecclesiastical Antichrist.

There is a difference of opinion with regard to these two beasts. One person says one is the Antichrist, and the other believes that the second beast is the Antichrist; but if we look upon one as the political Antichrist, and the other as the ecclesiastical Antichrist, we shall be possibly within the truth.

Now notice, with regard to the personality of the first beast, third verse: "And the whole earth wondered after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? And who is able to war with him?

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation"—world-wide authority, a world-emperor. "And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him." Evidently this world-emperor will be a great personality, with such powers of deception, that the whole world will be deceived by him and will worship him as if he were the Christ of God. In fact, he will be "like God"—the aim of Satan from the beginning.

Then we see the second beast, who "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast." And we are told in the sixteenth verse: "He causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of

his name"—*i.e.* there will be a universal boycott upon earth, and all who will not acknowledge the great political and ecclesiastical heads will perish by starvation and want.

The Coming Superman

So we have seen from these many passages a striking personality brought before us, a superman, a man of men, who was possibly the highest archangel in glory, created a personal being, in his unfallen state the greatest and most glorious of created beings without blemish ; perfect until iniquity was found in him. He fell through pride : his heart was lifted up because of his beauty. Then we see his great work as the antagonist of God, the " angel of light " who comes to man, humanly speaking good, deceiving mankind, thwarting God's purposes for mankind and exalting himself above all that is called God in this world : a world-emperor.

Covenant with the Jews

Now, before we go into the details of this man's reign look at the ninth chapter of Daniel and the twenty-seventh verse, where we see the same personality entering into a covenant : " He shall make a firm covenant with many for one week : and for the half of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the

oblation to cease." We see this personality entering into a solemn covenant with the people of Israel. As soon as the true Church of God has been "caught up" the "man of sin, the son of perdition" will manifest himself and be acclaimed, by a few nations at first and then by all of them, as the world-emperor. One of his first acts, at the commencement of the great tribulation, will be this covenant with the Jews, the children of Israel.

Now, what is that covenant into which he enters? Many think that it is outlined in the twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. A remarkable covenant is referred to in that chapter and is possibly not understood by those who have not considered this subject. God says, in the fourteenth verse: "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem: because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement." The people are in Jerusalem, you notice. Now, have the Jews at any time entered into such a covenant with death and hell as is here laid down? "When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold,

I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste."

Verse 18.—" Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand ; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it."

Verse 21.—" For the Lord shall rise up as in Mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon ; that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act."

One of the first acts, therefore, of this king, this world-emperor, is to enter into a covenant with the Jews. And we are told in the ninth chapter of Daniel that half-way through the Antichrist's reign as a world-emperor he is to break covenant with the Jews, and as a result the Jewish race will pass through a time of tribulation—" Jacob's trouble "—" such as they have never yet experienced in all their history. The Antichrist at the head of the world's armies will seek to destroy the Jew from off the face of the earth.

Now, before considering the end of this man's reign, let us ask, Are there any signs to-day in Christendom and in the political world which seem to be preparing for a great world-emperor ?

Religious Preparations for one great Ecclesiastical Head

There are two great systems of religion in the world to-day, both of which are rapidly developing, and preparing for a consummation of far-reaching results. The first is a spiritual and heavenward movement, a work of the Holy Spirit of God who is now gathering out from all nations an " elect remnant," and we all of us are looking forward to that day when " He shall appear," when the saints of God who belong to the body of Christ which is here upon the earth shall be " caught up " to be with the Lord. We are waiting ; we are watching ; and we are studying the signs of the times because we know that the day is very near. But, alongside of the expectation of the true Church and their waiting for their Lord and Master, another movement is rapidly developing unconsciously amongst the Churches and the religions of the world to an extent which possibly the religious leaders of the world would scarcely realise—viz. a great *ecclesiastical rationalistic social combine.* It seems as if all the religious systems of the world are now being undermined by the advance of civilisation and education, not only throughout Christendom, but throughout the whole religious world.

Apostasy Rampant

There is a spiritual upheaval such as there never has been in the history of the religions of the world. St. Paul tells us that in the latter days we are to look for such a spiritual upheaval. Look at the third chapter of the second Epistle to Timothy, reading from the Revised Version: "But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof: from these also turn away." Look at the second chapter of the second Epistle of Peter. We see there other signs given to us of false prophets. "There arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of." This is in Christendom. "If God

. . . spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly," we know that judgment must follow the great apostasy and religious revolution of to-day. There is no doubt that we are in the midst of a great spiritual, political and ecclesiastical upheaval. It is remarkable to notice how great religious leaders especially seem to speak with so little conviction and at the same time with sympathy towards those who do not accept the Christian faith. It is the fashion to be charitable towards those who do not agree with us and who hold other religious views to our own. There is a craving for unity which must of necessity be at the expense of conviction. All the religions of the world are seeking a twentieth-century expression of their faiths. The Church of Rome, for example, is being eaten up with a spirit which is called Modernism, which is just a type of what is going on amongst all the religions of the world.

In Poland and Bohemia over 1,000,000 people have left the Church of Rome within the past few years, which is a greater secession than any since the days of the Reformation. The Pope dare not put upon the Roman Catholics of Germany the "Ne temere" clause, for the bishops, priests and people of the

Church would rise up almost to a man and oppose it. The whole of the German and American Roman Catholicism is permeated with Modernism.

Reformed Judaism

During the last twenty-five years a great change has come over the intellectual thought amongst Jewry. Not long ago whenever the name of our Lord was mentioned amongst the Jews it was quite a common thing amongst rich and poor for them to curse and blaspheme. To-day they are proud to think that He is flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone. They are proud to think that He was a Jew and that it was the teaching of a Jew that has turned the world upside down. Even in the synagogues, especially in America, they sometimes use the New Testament and preach from the gospels, but not from the epistles. They are modelling their synagogue worship to a great extent amongst the Reformed Jews upon the basis of the parochial system of the Church of England. They sing psalms, and have taken some of our hymns, like "Abide with me," eliminating all references to our Lord as the Christ or the Saviour of mankind; but at the same time holding up our Lord's character for reverence and love, urging their people to live as He lived, a life of self-denial and doing good.

A World-wide Creed

New Theology and Modernism are so similar that the terms may be used interchangeably. This materialistic, rationalistic theology of the present day is permeating the whole of Christendom, and not only Christendom, but even the educated Moslems, Hindus, Japanese and Chinese, all of whom now have much in common in their beliefs. They no longer believe in the old traditions and dogmas of their forefathers, but are uniting together in a common expression of faith. At first sight such unanimity of thought seems to be invigorating and helpful. But what is it going to lead to? Practically all educated people in the world to-day, "whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of life," would subscribe to the following creed. First of all, a belief in the universal fatherhood of God; secondly, a belief in the brotherhood of man; with its natural results of fraternity and equality. They all say that there is no such personality as the devil; they assert the old-fashioned idea of punishment for sin or of a hell is disbelieved. Also they do not believe in the blessed Trinity. They will acknowledge that our Lord is Divine, but not Deity. They say the Scriptures are good, and so are also all the other old books of the religions of the world.

There is good in them, but they are man-devised, and as far as they help the twentieth-century spirit they are to be followed, and no further. As a Jew said not very long ago, he believed our Lord to be a man sent from God, a divine example for all men to follow, but he was not the Son of God. He believed that within a few years the world would be united by a common religion, and he enunciated what has been written above.

Now, how is this creed to work? "Raise the masses," is the cry. "Educate them; educate them." Philanthropic and social enterprises are to be undertaken by the Church. The world is to be improved and made better. Now the Bible shows very clearly that the world will never be improved by the Church, but there must be gathered out from the world a people unto God. Yet the Churches and these other religions to-day are seeking to improve the world and to make the world a better world. Such a creed, at first sight, sounds good, but it will only make the world more cultured and more educated. The idea of atonement is not once mentioned. A professor of theology in America said that the idea of blood-shedding as an atonement for sin is a pagan idea and savours of the butcher's shop. God's Word says: "It is the blood that

maketh an atonement for the soul." "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." But man is going to do without the atonement and try to save himself by working out his own salvation apart from God. He fondly hopes to make man's position as happy and bright as it can be and thus bring in the world's millennium; and he proposes to try to do this apart from the only way of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, man's atonement for sin.

Now, this great Rationalistic system is rapidly developing everywhere. To what is mankind drifting? Man cannot get on without a religion. We are so made that a religious faith is a necessity; and so, consequently, this system of lawlessness in faith is going to develop till "the man of sin," the great lawless one, is revealed (2 Thess. ii.). His manifestation will so affect mankind that they will accept him as the Christ and worship him as such, and he will "exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped." Just as Christians are looking for the Christ, the world is preparing rapidly for this Antichrist.[1]

A World-Emperor

Now let us see how the world is preparing

[1] Please read the introduction concerning *The Order of the Star of the East*, pp. 8-12.

for a world-emperor. The political as well as the religious world is preparing for a great leader. In the second chapter of Daniel there is brought before us an image. Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar, in the twenty-eighth verse : " There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and he hath made known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the *latter days*."

Verse 31.—" Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This image, which was mighty, and whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee ; and the aspect thereof was terrible. As for this image, his head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them in pieces."

Verse 37.—" Thou ,O king, art king of kings, unto whom the God of heaven hath given the kingdom, the power, and the strength, and the glory ; and wheresoever the children of men dwell "—universal authority—" the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee to rule over them all : thou art the head of gold " —absolute authority, absolute autocracy, is

given to Nebuchadnezzar. "And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee; and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that crusheth all these, shall it break in pieces and crush. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron doth not mingle with clay. And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

The Interpretation of the World Image

The head of gold represents Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who was an absolute

autocrat. Each metal deteriorates in value, but increases in strength. Each of these old-world kingdoms deteriorates in value, but increases in strength.

In each of the succeeding world-empires the authority of the rulers was lessened and became weaker and weaker till it got into the hands of the people. Nebuchadnezzar had absolute autocracy over all created things. In the second world-empire, the Medo-Persian, the power of the king was curtailed by his princes. In the Grecian Empire the will and power of Alexander was curtailed by the generals of his army, as well as by the princes. On Alexander's death, his dominions were divided amongst his four great generals. The Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom, was mainly ruled by the Senate and the people. On all the standards of Rome there were the letters, "S.P.Q.R."—*Senatus Populusque Romanus*.

It is believed that now we are in the very last portion of "the times of the Gentiles" of which this image was a picture or type. If that is so, the important question for us to consider is, When did the clay element start? The clay, practically all interpreters agree, is the democracy. The first time the democracy made itself felt within the domains of the old Roman Empire, possibly was at the first great

French Revolution. That Revolution not only dethroned the monarchy, but sought also to dethrone the Deity. These two destructive forces go together in this movement. Men refused to worship God in those days, even as France as a nation practically does to-day. They set up the Goddess of Reason for the people to worship and placed a strumpet on the altar of Notre Dame as the representative of that Goddess. They abolished, or at any rate they intended to abolish, for all time, the idea of one day in seven, and instead of that they made the day of rest one day in ten. They sought to destroy the Bible. Voltaire, one of the great republican leaders of those days, boasted and raved against the Bible and said: "In a hundred years' time this book will be forgotten." But in the irony of fate the very house in which Voltaire lived has been used as a publishing-house for the spread of the Bible throughout France.

Coming Democracy

Ever since those days agnostic democratic principles have been developing amongst the nations of the earth, especially throughout Christendom. The agnostic socialistic programme is against law and order, against God, against truth, and against righteousness, as laid down in God's Word; and to-day the

masses of the people, being influenced by such teaching, are beginning to realise the power that is in their hands. The voice of the people to-day is becoming more and more heard, and seems eventually to be destined to govern the politics of Christendom and even the whole world. As a result forces are coming into being that are getting out of all moral and governmental control ; people are not attending places of worship, but are listening to hundreds and thousands of agnostic socialistic lectures.

Yet, with the clay there is to be at the same time the iron of rule and authority. But the clay is now preponderating. The day is soon coming—and it seems that we are very near that day—when, because of the weakness of the clay and iron, that great world-empire will be shattered, and another kingdom will be set up, the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Just as the religious world, so also is the social world preparing for a great socialistic leader whose personality will so fascinate both the religious and the working classes—by his doctrines and his powers of deception—that they will claim him as the great world-emperor. But that day is to be a terrible day for the Jews. At first the Jews will help to place that man upon the throne and help him in his schemes in the first part of his reign, but

when he has finished with the Jews—their wealth, their enterprise, their intellect, for there is a great deal of intellect in both these ecclesiastical and socialistic movements of to-day—he will then set his face against them. It will be his great object to wipe off from the face of this earth every trace that the Bible is the Word of God and that it is the inspired revelation from God. He will know, as the infidel knows to-day, that the Jew is a miracle, a testimony to the inspiration of the Scriptures, and therefore he will seek to wipe off the Jews from the face of this earth, and thus destroy the very evidence of the truth of the Scriptures, which is both undeniable and unanswerable.

Jerusalem besieged

In Zechariah, the twelfth chapter and the second verse, "Behold," says God, "I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem." Now, what siege? "And it shall come to pass in that day." Whenever we read the words, "in that day," it invariably means the Messiah's day. "It shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples: all that burden themselves with it shall be sore

wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it." There never has been a period in the history of the world when all the nations of the earth were gathered against Jerusalem.

Verse 6.—" Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in her own place, even in Jerusalem."

Verse 8.—" In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day "—God says these words—" that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."

Again look at Zechariah, the thirteenth chapter and the eighth verse: " And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

That has not yet happened, and it is only going to happen when the Jews are there in the land and in the direst straits, as is seen

from this picture. They shall recognise the Lord as their God. Such a thing has not yet come to pass.

Look again at the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, verses twenty-one and twenty-two. We see there a time of great tribulation. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." A time of great trouble.

The Coming of the King of Kings

Now look at the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah. "Behold, a day of the Lord cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished: and half of the city shall go forth into captivity." There will be a large number taken into captivity during that time of tribulation when this terrible great world-emperor is reigning. He has brought all his armies together to wipe the Jews off the face of this earth. "And the residue of the people shall not be cut off."

Now look at the third verse: "Then shall

the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations."

Verse 4.—" And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley ; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." A great convulsion of nature.

Verse 5.—" The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints (holy ones) with thee "—*i.e.* possibly those who have been caught up to meet the Lord.

Verse 9.—" And the Lord shall be king over all the earth." In contradistinction to the world-emperor, the Antichrist. " The Lord shall be king over all the earth : in that day shall the Lord be one, and his name one." So we see very briefly—far too briefly—the history of a personality who is to bewitch the whole of mankind ; and his endeavours to " exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped," and how the nations of the world will acknowledge him as the Christ. He will be man's man, whose reign will culminate with the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Meanwhile

Realising these things, that " the mystery of iniquity doth already work," and that we are in the very midst of a great apostasy from the faith and in the very midst of a great social upheaval in the world, what manner of people ought we to be? Do not let us be depressed when we see the rising of democracy and these great social upheavals. They are destined to become very influential to an alarming extent in the near future. The agnostic socialists, trade unions and other similar movements are seeking to get capital into their own hands and to overturn the existing order of rule and authority. These people are only just beginning to feel their power, and no one knows how rapidly and to what extent it may develop.

These things must come to pass, but as far as the true and whole-hearted Christian is concerned, " the Lord reigneth." He is over all. But man must have his day. Man must be humbled. Man will have his king after his own heart and seek to save himself in his own way. Man wants unconsciously " to be like God," a free agent to do what he likes, as he fondly imagines. But all the time man is but a mere puppet in the hands of " the god of this age," who is seeking to thwart God's plan of redemption.

Great Need of the Church

These are signs that the Lord is near, even at the doors. Therefore, at all costs, let us see to it that we are not led away by up-to-date theological books or Christian leaders, no matter how clever those books or men may be. There never was a time in the history of the Church of God when we needed more to be students of the Bible from cover to cover—from Genesis and the prophetical books to the gospels, the epistles, and the Book of Revelation. We need to be men and women of the whole Book and to possess the whole Book. Unfortunately the Christians of to-day are only reading a small portion of the Bible, leaving out of their reading and study the " more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place " (2 Peter i. 19).

Not only do we need to have an intimate knowledge of the whole Bible, but the seriousness of the times in which we live demands personal holiness of life. There never was a time when the world so much needed holy men and holy women of God whose one passion in life is to let God have His way with them as to-day. We have friends, relations and loved ones with whom we daily come into contact who are in the world and who know not God ;

and yet very soon the Master must appear, and we know that they are not ready to meet Him.

Shall we therefore ask our God that all we are and all we have and all our influence may be absolutely under the control of the Holy Spirit, so that the world may know whose we are and whom we serve by our life and conduct.

To this end, then, dear friends, realising that these things are coming to pass and that the coming of Christ must be near, and that the development of the anti-Christian system is coming to a climax, and that there are perishing souls around us unprepared for the great deception that is coming upon this world, let us see to it whilst we have the time and opportunity we may prepare those who come into contact with us for that great day.

VII

ISRAEL AND GOD'S OATH TO DAVID

SIGNIFICANT things have recently been happening in the political world, but none more remarkable than the attitude of the nations towards Palestine and the Jews. The League of Nations has ratified the policy of Great Britain to restore the Jews to Palestine, and Great Britain has been honoured by having given to it the Mandate for that country. This fact is big with significance to the Bible student, for we know that "the Lord reigneth," and nothing happens by chance, and He is specially at this time overruling the destinies of His Chosen Race.

To understand the present situation, we must remember two things—(1) that God has a definite plan for world redemption; (2) that that plan is wrapped up in Israel and Palestine. It is of paramount importance, therefore, that we should realise that the predicted destinies of Palestine and all the Israelitish race are absolutely sure and certain; for God has sworn by two unconditional oaths that He will manifest His glory and power, both in the land and in the people of

the land. One of these oaths has been well studied by students of prophecy, viz., God's oath to Abraham, as revealed in Gen. xii. 1-3. Therefore, on that oath at present we have nothing to say, but wish rather to draw special attention to the other oath that has not received the study which is due to it, viz., God's oath to David, which is found in 2 Sam. vii.

God's Oath to David

Israel had been passing through days of great crisis, and at last David had overcome all his enemies, and the country was now at rest. David had rebuilt Jerusalem, and suddenly there came to his mind the thought, "I dwell in an house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within curtains." Therefore he resolved to build God a House worthy of Jehovah, and Nathan the prophet approved, saying, "Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee." God's subsequent message to David through Nathan should be very carefully and prayerfully considered :—

Verse 11.—The Lord telleth thee that He will make thee an house.

Verse 12.—. . . I will set up thy seed after thee.

Verse 13.—. . . . I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

Verse 16.—. . . thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

Whilst David, on the one hand, was concerned about building a House for God, God, on the other hand, gave a definite promise that He would not only build a house unto David, but establish his throne and his kingdom for ever.

The question we want to ask is: "Are these promises given by God to David to be taken literally or spiritually? The prevailing idea is to spiritualise all these predictions and promises, and the result is to-day we have false ideas of what the Kingdom of God really is. David certainly did not spiritualise them, but he believed that God was going to do just what He had said:

Verse 25.—Now, O Lord God, the word that Thou hast spoken concerning Thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as Thou hast said.

Verse 27.—For Thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to Thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath Thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto Thee.

Verse 28.—And now, O Lord God, Thou art that God, and Thy words be true, and Thou hast promised this goodness unto Thy servant.

Verse 29.—Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue for ever before Thee: for Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed for ever.

Was David right in regarding these promises of God as literal? Is David to have a literal earthly throne? Is David's Kingdom going to be established for ever? This is a most important question, in the light of modern views on the Kingdom of God. The word "House" is used over 2,000 times in the Old Testament in exactly the same sense, viz., that of a family. The word "Kingdom" is always used literally in the Old Testament; "Throne" is always used literally, never once in its modern spiritual sense. Has the "House of David," the "Throne of David," and the "Kingdom of David" been literally established in Jerusalem? No! Then is God going to be true to His oath? Time and again in the dark days of the Monarchy prophets were raised up who re-affirmed this oath to the descendants of the House of David.

Jer. xxxiii. 14-26:

14.—Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

15.—In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

16.—In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.

17.—For thus saith the Lord: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel.

18.—Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.

19.—And the word of the Lord came unto Jerusalem, saying.

20.—Thus saith the Lord: If ye can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;

21.—Then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, My ministers.

22.—As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David My servant, and the Levites that minister unto Me.

23.—Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying.

24.—Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord hath chosen, He hath even cast them off? thus they have despised My people, that they should be no more a nation before them.

25.—Thus saith the Lord: If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;

26.—Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them.

Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4 and 35, 36:

Verse 3.—I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant.

Verse 4.—Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

Verse 35.—Once have I sworn by My holiness that I will not lie unto David.

Verse 36.—His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before Me.

The Genealogical Tables

These promises have nothing whatever to do with the Church or its future glory. They refer to an earthly kingdom that is going to be definitely established here on this earth, and reigned over by David's Greater Son. There is a very remarkable prophecy, in St. Luke i. 32, 33, concerning the Lord Jesus: "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Surely these words are not meant for a spiritual, but a literal Throne and a literal Kingdom! The Lord Jesus, as the Son of David, is the King of Israel, and there is no other King. The Lord Jesus, as the Son of Abraham, is the Heir of the Covenant of Promise. In St. Matthew's Genealogical Table we have David's line

through Solomon ; in St. Luke's Genealogical Table, the descendants of David's line through Nathan : in St. Matthew we see the parentage of Joseph ; in St. Luke, the parentage of Mary through Nathan. The marriage of Joseph made Jesus the adopted son and legal heir of Joseph. Therefore in the Lord Jesus the royal line of David ceases, and there is no other King of Israel—" . . . who shall declare His generation ? for He was cut off out of the land of the living : for the transgression of My people was He stricken " (Isa. liii. 8). Dying thus, *without generation*, He carried the title away with Him. It is a very striking thing to notice that constantly in our Lord's lifetime, and during His ministry, He is designated " the Son of David." Blind Bartimaeus, outside the City of Jerusalem, addresses Him as " the Son of David." On Palm Sunday, as recorded in St. Matthew xxi. 4, 5, 8 and 9, we read of the triumphal entry : " All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. . . . And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way ; others cut down branches from the trees and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went

before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the *Son of David* ; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest."

It is most important to realise that the claim of Jesus to be the Heir of David was known in Jerusalem to be absolutely without a flaw ; all acknowledged it ; it was not even challenged by the priests who accused Him. They would certainly have done so if it were possible, for up to Christ's death all the Genealogical Tables of the descendants of David were kept in the Temple, and were easily accessible to the people ; unfortunately, they are generally thought to have been destroyed with the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple in A.D. 70. " The King of the Jews " is, therefore, no empty title. " He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." He proved His title, but He could not take the Throne, and from that day to this He is a rejected King ; on the rejection of their Messiah and King the Jewish race were sentenced to partial blindness and that is their condition to this day. " Having eyes they see not, and ears they hear not." But a day is predicted when this " blindness " is to cease, and their eyes are to be opened, and they are to " look unto Him Whom they have pierced." Then, and not

till then, Israel will enter into the fulness of their promised blessing. Then David's Throne and Kingdom will be established.

When is David's throne to be set up and his kingdom to be established?

The Bible is very clear on this matter; there are especially **three** sure signs as to the time when God's oath to David is to be literally fulfilled.

(1) **The Lord Jesus Christ, David's greater Son, is to come at a period of grave unrest in the world.**

In Dan. ii. and vii. we are forewarned that in the last days before the Second Advent of Christ, the whole world is to be in a state of turmoil. These two chapters give us the cause of that turmoil.

In Dan. ii. we have a vision of a great image, foreshadowing the great world-empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, consisting of gold, silver, brass and iron. The metals in each case from the head to the feet deteriorate in value, but increase in power. Golden Babylon stood for absolute autocracy, the Persian silver, for a limited monarchy, the Grecian brass for a more limited monarchy of military governorship; and on the standard of iron Rome were painted the letters S.P.Q.R. (the initial letters of "The Senate and the

Roman People"). That is to say in the last Gentile power the people were associated with government; but special attention is drawn to the toes and feet, which were of iron and burnt clay mixed. The iron representing the strong rule of monarchical authority, the clay representing the uncertain rule of the people. What is more fickle than "Vox Populi"? and what is more brittle than burnt clay?

Dan. ii. 43-44.

And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave one to another even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and it shall stand for ever.

Here is a distinct prediction that when these two elements of government are manifest amongst the nations of the earth, we are to expect the setting up of the Kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

In the light of these revelations we cannot but be profoundly stirred as we see the political developments throughout Europe and America. On all sides we see the development of the clay principles and non-Christian

thinking men are frankly puzzled and filled with anxiety as to what the future may bring : but the Christian who believes his Bible knows that " these things must come to pass that the Scriptures might be fulfilled " and are sure indications that " the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

(2) The Return of the JEWS to Palestine

The second great sign that the coming of the Lord, and the fulfilling of God's oath to David is about to come to pass, is the remarkable restoration of the Jews to Palestine, and Palestine to the Jews.

A few years ago only the ardent student of prophecy believed in the possibility of the Jews being restored to Palestine ; the man of the world could not foresee the remarkable developments that have proceeded apace since the end of the war, as a result of the victorious Allies giving facilities to the Jews to go back to their land. But the prophetic Scriptures throughout the whole of the Old Testament predict that GENTILE NATIONS would restore the Jews to their land, as a result of the overruling providence of God. For example Isa. xi. 11-12 :—

> And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left. . . .

Verse 12.—And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isa. xlix. 22 :—

Thus saith the Lord God behold I will lift up My hand to the Gentiles . . . and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

Isa. lxvi. 20 :—

And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations.

The Lord will have mercy on Jacob and will chose Israel and set them in their own land, and the people (the Gentile nations) shall take them and bring them to their place.

This second sign is being literally fulfilled before our very eyes.

(3) The third sign is as yet unfulfilled, viz., **There is to be a great war in Palestine, and the cause of this war is to be the restoration of the Jews to their land.**

The details of that war are to be found in Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. But in Zech. xiv. 1-9 we are told that David's greater Son is coming to this earth when :—

Verse 1.—All nations shall be gathered together to Jerusalem to battle.

Verse 3.—Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations.

Verse 4.—And His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.

Verse 9.—And the Lord shall be King over all the earth.

From these passages we deduct that this old world is tired and worn out, the Devil for six thousand years or more has held sway over the sons of men ; but at the coming of David's greater Son The Devil is to be dethroned and " the god of this age " is to be cast down and bound for a thousand years, and thus the cause of all earth's distress, misery, pain and sickness will be dealt with, and the New Age will be inaugurated : there will then be peace on earth and goodwill among men. Then David's greater Son will reign from Jerusalem, and Abraham's seed, the Jewish race, will be " a blessing in the midst of the earth."

VIII

ISRAEL, ARMAGEDDON AND THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST TO THIS EARTH

All students of Prophecy realise that we are living in a most remarkable age. Affairs are now heading up to those very issues predicted two thousand five hundred years ago, or more. The developments since 1918 in the Politics of Europe and the Near East are big with tremendous and far-reaching possibilities.

God is undoubtedly speaking to the whole of Christendom through these things. "The Lord Reigneth," and He is the Ruler of the affairs of men, and nothing is happening by mere chance or coincidence. We have seen recently the formation of practically two Leagues of Nations. The one comprising of the Nations in the middle and south of Europe and the Near East ; and the other comprising of the Northern Nations of Europe and the countries North of Palestine, such as Germany, Russia and Turkey.

The wonderful thing about the formation of these Leagues of Nations is, that they are predicted in the Bible, and certain things ensue as a result of their coming into being,

which must eventually lead to a great War in Palestine, during which war the Second Advent of Christ is likely to come.

Surely then, every one of us must realise that we are living in ominous days, and every Christian should study his Bible in the light of modern Politics in Europe and the Near East. We are on the verge of tremendous and far-reaching events.

In opening up the prophetic Scriptures on these vital matters it is important to lay down an axiom of interpretation, viz., that fulfilled prophecy is to be our guide. Just as hundreds of prophecies have been literally and minutely fulfilled with regard to the history of the Jews, Palestine and the first Advent of our Lord, as to the manner of His birth, life, ministry and death—so also in just as minute and literal way are we to interpret the predictions with regard to His Second Advent.

I want to shew how the Great War of 1914-1918 has paved the way for the fulfilment of God's plans for the Jews and for the nations of the world in a remarkable way.

Let us for a few moments try and grasp what has happened during the past ten years.

1.—The old Bible lands of Palestine, Egypt and Mesopotamia, have been opened up in a remarkable way. Up to a few years ago these lands were comparatively obscure, of no

great value politically, and only important from a religious and sentimental point of view. Concerning these lands prophecy has a great deal to say. Their past is most interesting and important. Once they were the centre of world civilisation, culture and commerce. When Assyria, Palestine and Egypt were flourishing, Isaiah and Ezekiel, 2,500 years ago, predicted that there would come desolation throughout the whole of these lands: and as a matter of history we know that desolation did come in exactly the way predicted: but the Old Testament prophets did not stop there, they also predicted that in the last days these lands should revive again: and these predictions are happening before our very eyes.

2.—Isa. xi. 11 distinctly foretells that the Jews would be restored from their world dispersion for the "second time."

"And it shall come to pass on that day, that the Lord shall set His *hand* again the *second time* to recover the remnant of His people. . . . And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." This prediction is now coming to pass before our eyes; the Jews are now organising themselves to possess their own God-given land.

Both the movements among the Jews and the opening up of Palestine and the Bible lands are of the utmost significance prophetically.

3.—Why must these lands awake? Why must the Jews go back again to their land?

The Bible with no uncertain sound distinctly states that these lands must be revived and the Jews restored to their land to prepare the way for the Second Coming of Christ to this earth.

4.—The Old Testament prophets also predicted in great detail and extraordinary minuteness what would be the condition of the world politically when these old Bible lands begin to revive and when the Jews begin to return to Palestine. They actually foretell that there are to be two Leagues of Nations, the one opposed to the other. Also how these Leagues of Nations are to come into being, and what will be their attitude the one to the other.

5.—The League of Nations is to occupy mainly the area of the old Roman Empire; Daniel ii. and vii. give the details of this League of Nations. Daniel's image stands upon feet made part of clay and part of iron, and special attention is drawn to the *ten* toes of that image, concerning which we are told they are ten kings that are to arise immediately before the coming of Christ, and that

those kings will represent nations part of iron and part of clay—iron representing monarchial rule and clay democratical rule. This is the very condition of affairs to-day in Europe. In Dan. vii. we have the same thing represented under another symbol, viz., "*ten* horns." The remarkable thing about this is that in the present League of Nations there are ten outstanding kings, leaders or governments, of which Great Britain is a prominent member. Also what is very striking to notice, is that this present League of Nations comprises, as far as Europe and the Near East is concerned, practically those nations within the area of the old Roman Empire! But what is still more remarkable is the fact that since their inception ten nations have worked in harmony the one with the other. For example:—In the "Evening Standard" of April 22nd, 1922, it was reported that ten of the nations of the League of Nations united together to protest against the Russio-German compact!

6.—The prophet Joel distinctly foretells that this dispensation in which we are now living is to close with a terrible war in Palestine, and that Palestine and the Powers that govern Palestine will be absolutely unprepared for that war owing to disarmament.

Joel iii. 1 is most interesting in the light of

the present happenings in the Near East: "Behold in that day and at that time"; therefore Joel is referring to a particular period in the world's history. What is "that day" and when is "that time"? "When I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem." That is just what is happening to-day! The Jews are being restored to their land and Jerusalem is being set free: now we are distinctly told that when this happens "I will gather all nations and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat."

What for? Verses 9-16 reveal the reason. "Proclaim ye this amongst the nations: prepare war, stir up the mighty men; let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Haste ye, and come, all ye nations round about, and gather yourselves together: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the nations bestir themselves, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all nations round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe, come tread ye, for the winepress is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The

sun and moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining. And the Lord shall roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake, but the Lord will be a refuge unto His people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel."

That is to say, the nations are to bestir themselves because there is to be a war in Palestine. The reason why these nations must be stirred is because owing to the disarmament policy of the League of Nations they will be unready for that which is about to come.

7.—What and who will be the cause of this war?

A second League of Nations is to come into being who are envious of the Jews and who want to establish themselves in Palestine and the Near East: and it is to this second League of Nations that I would draw your special attention, for prophecy has a great deal to say concerning it. This new combine of Powers is to be outside the confines of the old Roman Empire.

8.—Who are to form this new League of Nations?

Ezek. xxxviii. and xxxix. (*R.V.*) reveals very clearly the details of this new combine. As we read through the first thirteen verses of Ezek. xxxviii. we find that it is a combine

under the leadership of a personality called the "prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal." "Rosh" is the ancient word for Russia, "Meshech" the old word for Moscow, and "Tubal" for Tobolsk. Allied with this great leader is (verse 5) Persia, Abyssinia, and Libya or part of the Sudan. (Verse 6) "Gomer . . . and Togarmah." *Who are these nations?* Ethnologists tell us, that Gomer may be the forefather of the Teutonic races, and Togarmah the forefather of the Turkish race. Gen. x. 2 says that Gomer is the son of Japhet, and he had a son called Ashkenaz. Now the Jews are divided into two classes, one described as the Ashkenazim, who are the German-speaking Jews, and the others the Spanish speaking Jews. It is within the bounds of possibility, therefore, that Gomer may represent Germany.

[1] GOG, GOMER, TOGARMAH, AND ASHKENAZ.

GOG is first mentioned in Ezek. xxxviii. 2, 3, and throughout chapters xxxviii. and xxxix.

The name is held to one of title, descriptive of dignity, as Pharaoh, Caesar, Czar, Kaiser, etc., and is held to correspond to the Turkish Chak, the Tartarian Kak, and the Mongolian Gog (Kalisch).

[1] *Vide* Titterton's "Armageddon." (Publishers, C. J. Thynne & Jarvis. Price 2/6.)

"Gog of the land of Magog" (verse 2)—Magog is referred to Armenia, or part of it.

It is thought that Gog and Magog "are the general name of the northern nations of Europe and Asia, or the districts north of Caucasus, on Mount Taurus, colonised by Gog or Magog, another of the sons of Japheth" (Gen. x. 2).

Mat="land" in Assyrian. So Magog="Matgog," *i.e.*, the land of Gog (Sayce).

GOMER.—"In Lange's commentary on Gen. x. 3 we get the following remarks on Gomer:—G.M.R.: These radical letters are found extensively combined in the history and geography of Europe; as though some early roving people had left the mark of their name from the Pontus, on the Black Sea, to Ireland," "*G.M.R.*," "K.M.R.," "G.R.M.," *Germanica*, etc. "There is every possibility that they were left by the same ancient people, ever driven on westward by successive waves of migration."

TOGARMAH.—Mentioned in Gen. x. 3 as the son of Gomer, the son of Japheth. Also mention of him is found in 1 Chron. i. 6; Ezek. xxvii. 14 and xxxviii. 6, which last reads: "Gomer and all his bands (wings or forces); the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands; and many people (peoples) with thee."

Togarmah is held to refer to North Armenia, though generally used by Jewish writers of the Turks. Armenians are still said to be called "the house of Torgom." Some see Togarmah in "Turk" and "Tartar." Togarmah is combined with Gog in the last war of Armageddon.

Allied with this great combine of nations we are told that there are many other nations, unnamed, and we are inclined to think, comparing these passages with Armageddon in Revelation, that the northern League of Nations calls to its aid many Asiatic nations who are interested in Palestine and the Near East, *e.g.*, Moslem Powers.

9.—When are these nations to unite? Does Scripture give us any indication? Yes, three times in Ezek. xxxviii., and xxxix., we read "after many days," "in the latter days," "in the latter years."

10.—For what purpose do they unite? What is their plan of campaign? Ezek. xxxviii. 8-12, "After many days thou shalt be visited, in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, that is gathered out of many peoples upon the mountains of Israel, which have been a continual waste, but it is brought forth out of the peoples, and they shall dwell securely, all of them. And thou shalt ascend, thou

shalt come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy hordes, and many peoples (nations) with thee. Thus saith the Lord God. It shall come to pass in that day that things shall come into thy mind and thou shalt devise an evil device. And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of un-walled villages, I will go to them that are at quiet, that dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates. To take the spoil and to take the prey, to turn thine hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and against the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the middle of the earth."

We see in the above, that these nations are envious of the Jewish race restored to their land, who are dwelling unprotected, and have got great wealth and spoil. There is no doubt about it, the Jews as a people in the war of 1914-1918 accumulated great wealth, which they are prepared to spend to a great extent upon their new home in Palestine.

11.—What is to be the final issue of this invasion of Palestine?

Ezek. xxxviii., verse 20. "All men that are upon the face of the earth shall shake at My presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall,

and every wall shall fall to the ground." This reveals two things:

(*a*) When the northern army seems to be absolutely successful and carrying everything before it, there is to be a sudden earthquake which will fill all their host with alarm and fear.

(*b*) There is a Theophany: a manifestation of the presence of God.

12.—Are there any other Scriptures in harmony with these predictions?

Yes, several. We are distinctly told for example in Zech. xiv. that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be in the middle of a great war in Palestine, and that when He comes there will be a terrific earthquake. Zech. xiv. 5, 9. "Behold a day of the Lord cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather *all* nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the house rifled . . . and the city shall go forth into captivity and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. *And in that day His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives,* which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west,

and there shall be a very great valley ; and half the mountain shall remove toward the north and half of it toward the south." Verse 9 : " And the Lord shall be King over all the earth." Here we are distinctly told that all nations are to be gathered against Jerusalem to battle ; the northern army with their host shall be arrayed against the southern League of Nations, and in the midst of this terrific fight the Lord will appear, and there is to be a terrific earthquake.

13.—But there is another event of tremendous importance which occurs before the full development of the last days, and the final developments of the plans of campaign of the two Leagues of Nations ; for if we read prophecy aright, seven years before the Lord Jesus comes to this earth, He is to appear in the air for His saints, *i.e.*, for those who believe in Him.

Perhaps some will say, " how do we know this ? " In Dan. ix. 27 we are distinctly told that a leader arises in the southern League of Nations who is to enter into a covenant with the Jews, and for three and a half years will abide by that covenant, but at the end of that period he will break it, and for another three and a half years the Jews are to suffer terribly at the hands of the nations in Palestine : but we are told in 2 Thess. ii. that before that

leader, whom we believe is the Antichrist, enters into covenant with the Jews, before he is revealed, " that which restrains lawlessness is taken out of the way." Also Rev. iv. and v. reveals to us the Church triumphant in Heaven and when the Church triumphant has been caught up, and not until then, will begin that period known as the tribulation of seven years, at the end of which Christ appears on the earth.

14.—An investigation—not a prediction. *Have we any indication as to what year the Lord Jesus is likely to come again?* Daniel gives us dates—do they mean anything to us? In Dan. xii. 10 he is informed that a day shall come when " the wise shall understand " the significance of these dates. When, then, are these figures likely to be understood? Surely these dates are to be understood in the closing days of this age just immediately preceding the Second Advent of Christ. Practically everybody will agree that the " times of the Gentiles " began about 587 B.C., when the Temple was burned and the last king, Zedekiah, was led away into exile. The length of the period of the " times of the Gentiles " is given to us in Lev. xxvi. 18, 21, 24, 28, " I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will bring seven times more plagues upon you. . . . I will punish you yet seven

times for your sins. . . . I will chastise you seven times for your sins." A "time" is equal to the Jewish calendar of 360 days. In Dan. vii. 25 we have the oft-repeated phrase, "a time and times and the dividing of time." This is equal to 1,260 days. Thus the "seven times" of Israel's punishment are 360 by 7; 2,520 prophetic days. Numbers xiv. 33-34, "And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be consumed in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, *for every day a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my alienation." These verses tell us that a "day" of Israel's punishment equals a year. The same year "day" is to be found in the sixty-nine weeks of Messiah, the Prince, in Dan. ix. 25. These 69 weeks multiplied by 7 equal 483 prophetic days, which was the exact number of years from Artaxerxes decree (Neh. ii. 5) to the Crucifixion; or 2,520 days of Israel's punishment equals 2,520 solar years. If we add 2,520 to 587 B.C. this conducts us to A.D. 1934. 587 B.C. was the year of 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9, "Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Baby-

lon, came Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, even every great house burnt he with fire."

The late Bishop Handley Moule, of Durham, who could scarcely be called a rash man, declared in an address at Cannon Street Hotel just before he died that he believed that we were now near the closing days of this age, and that the Lord Jesus Christ was likely to come to this earth some time before 1934.[1] He would not, and could not, be dogmatic as to this date: yet we must all believe that Daniel's figures must have some significance.

Personally, I believe "the rapture of the saints" will take place some time before the Lord Jesus comes to this earth. Many people believe there will be a period of seven years between "the rapture of the saints" and the Second Coming of Christ, and if this is so we must now be on the very verge of "the rapture of the saints." The Lord Jesus may appear "in the air" for His saints very soon now. In presenting these conclusions we must be as cautious as possible. Our Lord definitely forewarned us "of that day and

[1] "The Hope of the Near Approach of the Lord's Return," Price 4d. (Thynne & Jarvis.)

hour knoweth no man." I have, therefore, only brought this question to the fore that we may realise the solemnity of the days in which we live, and that we seem to be living in the very last days. Surely in these circumstances it behoves us to be waiting, watching, and working for the coming of the Lord Jesus, that we may be ready at any moment to appear before Him!

15.—In these circumstances "what manner of persons ought we to be?" We believe God is speaking as solemnly as He can to all men to be prepared for the tremendous events that are upon us. Therefore let us come to the Cross of Calvary, and there confess our sins, and claim His forgiveness and cleansing, for only those who have come to Jesus Christ thus, can be ready for His appearing.

And for those of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ, He is speaking to us with no uncertain sound urging us to "buy up the opportunities" and organise ourselves to pray and work that our personal influence may be as effective as possible; and to use all our energies in seeking with passionate earnestness the souls of those who are not ready for the things that seem likely shortly to come to pass. And thus, we shall be ready, waiting, watching, and working, and shall not be "ashamed at His appearing."

An Appeal

I would very humbly appeal to my fellow clergy, ministers and Bible Class leaders to very carefully consider the above study to see if these things are really so. If the coming of the Lord into the air is as near as we suppose if the signs of the times are so ominous, is not our God calling us to make these things known, and to thus prepare the way for His appearing? One day, and it may be soon, we shall all appear before " the Judgment Seat of Christ," and must then give an account of our knowledge, our opportunities of doing good, our responsibility towards those over whom we have been appointed pastors and teachers. In the light of that day let us declare the whole counsel of God on these grave and important matters. Nothing quickens the spiritual life of our people more than the study and the exposition of the prophetic Scriptures when applied to the heart and the conscience. May we ever remind ourselves that it is the special province of the Holy Spirit to shew us " things to come." A spirit-filled servant of God must be an all round full-orbed Christian. The whole Bible is the Word of God, and declares the whole counsel of God, and more than half of the Bible is prophecy.

" The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

IX

ISRAEL AND THE KINGDOM

BEFORE dealing with the subject of Israel and the Kingdom, one or two difficulties must be first considered. " Where is the Church dur- the time of the Tribulation? What is it doing? " Does the Scripture enlighten us with regard to the condition of those who have been " caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and what they are likely to be doing whilst the Antichrist is manifested here upon earth? What is their condition? And what are they to undergo? To answer these questions a subject must be dealt with about which there is much misunderstanding amongst Christians in general. Possibly the large majority may have never thought out the subject of God's judgments carefully, and prayerfully; and yet there is no subject more important about which the Christian should have a clear understanding.

The Four Judgments

In the New Testament there are, at least, four judgments brought before our notice. *The first being judgment in Christ.* St. Paul,

in Romans viii. 1, clearly states that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Our Lord also, in St. John v. 24, was equally emphatic when He said : " Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, *hath* eternal life "—a present possession—" and cometh not into judgment, but *hath* passed out of death into life." Not " will pass," but hath already passed. There are other references, but these two passages, one from St. Paul and the other from the words of our Lord, clearly assure us that we who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ have passed from death unto life and that there is no judgment—*i.e.* no eternal condemnation—for those who are in Christ Jesus. And yet is not the non-understanding of this glorious truth the reason why so many Christians fear death, and dread the thought of the Judgment Day ? Is it not because they do not realise that, when Christ died on Calvary, He suffered the full wrath of God in our stead, and therefore there is now no judgment to those who are " in Christ Jesus " ? O believer, let us rest upon this glorious truth. Christ has suffered in our stead the full penalty for sin, and therefore for us there is no such thing as judgment in that awful sense which many Christian people believe.

The idea of a great final judgment day when every one of us will have to appear before the Great White Throne, both the good and the bad, and all to be judged, is most erroneous and unscriptural. If the heart is cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ and our lives are at His disposal, there should be no such fearful dread of judgment, since Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary fully atoned for our sins.

The Bema

At the same time it must be emphasised that there are passages in the epistles which refer to *judgment of Christians.* Take, for instance, 2 Cor. v. 10. St. Paul, in speaking to the Corinthian Christians, says: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Now, is not that a contradiction of what has just been stated? No, the Greek word is very different. The word βημα (judgment seat) used there does not refer to "the Great White Throne" judgment. On looking carefully at 2 Cor. v. 10, we notice that that judgment does not refer to either eternal salvation or condemnation. It is, "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ; that each one may receive *the things done in the body*, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This judgment, then,

has special reference to the believer's works, "the things that he hath done in the body." It is not a question of sin and of the believer being judged for eternal life, but it is a question of the fruit of his life that is examined.

Now look at 1 Cor. iii. 10-17. St. Paul again is addressing the Christians, and he says "According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss"—notice these words—"but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire."

What do these words mean? It is evident that all those who are trusting in the atoning blood of Christ are built upon the foundation which is Christ Himself. Every day we are adding to that building of which Christ Jesus

is the foundation. The all-important question for the Christian to ask is: Are all my works every moment of my life of that which is typified by "gold, silver, and precious stones"? If so, will they stand the searching test of fire, the fire of God's holiness? But if they are of "wood, hay, stubble," they will be burned up. "We shall be saved, yet so as through fire"—but lose our reward.

In the light of that day which may come directly after the saints have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air, how are we living? Every one of us must stand before that examination seat at which we shall have to give an account as to how we have spent or misspent our lives, our time, our talents, our money, our influence, our opportunities, and everything that goes to make up life. May the Holy Spirit reveal to us now, while there is time to rectify what is wrong, what sort of building we are raising upon that foundation! Is it works of vain glory, that we may be thought to be good or holy?—"Wood, hay, stubble." If all that goes to make up life is laid upon God's altar and our whole soul has one passionate longing and cry, "Lord, spend me, moment by moment, for Thy honour and glory," there will be "gold, silver, precious stones." It is quite possible in that day many a famous preacher and Christian leader coming

before that judgment seat may have to take a very low place, and many a humble washer-woman or somebody who has a very humble place in life who has done his or her menial work in the simple things of daily life to the glory and praise of God will take a very high and exalted place.

Dear Christian friends, we shall all have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. May God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of fire, that will test our works in that day, so deal with us that, from this time, nothing but what is of pure gold and silver and precious stones may be seen in our lives and conduct before God and our fellow-men.

The Judgment of the Nations

The third judgment is mentioned in St. Matt. xxv. There is a great deal of controversy about this chapter, and it is possible the least understood of all the judgments. Therefore, this subject demands that it should not be dealt with in a dogmatic way. This chapter deals with the second part of that discourse which was opened up by the question : " What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world ? " (St. Matt. xxiv. 3). In the thirty-first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter the Lord Jesus teaches, " When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with

him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory"—*i.e.* not the great white throne, "the throne of His glory." We do not read in this chapter that the dead appear before Christ at all. Who, then, are arraigned before the Judge?

Verse 32.—"Before Him shall be gathered all nations." So this is a judgment of the living nations then existing. What is the basis of this judgment? There are the sheep and the goats—two metaphorical figures—who are brought to the bar for a special purpose, and the question is asked, How have they treated "these My brethren?" To whom do these words, "these My brethren," refer? Who are the brethren of our Lord according to the flesh? The children of Israel, whom some of the nations have been treating abominably during the years of that terrible and awful great Tribulation, and especially when they are gathered against Jerusalem to battle as described in Zech. xiv. 1-9. Now comes "the King of the Jews" to sit in judgment upon those who, during the time of the great Tribulation, have so ill-treated His own brethren. "The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me."

Wrath of God

Ps. ii. gives a very vivid description of the day when Christ comes to this earth. The Psalm naturally divides itself into four stanzas of three verses each.

In the first stanza we see the kings of the earth, the rulers or presidents and the peoples revolting "against the Lord and His Anointed," —*i.e.* the Christ, for the word "Christ" means anointed.

In the second stanza we see the Lord laughing in "derision" at the foolish and blasphemous revolt against the reign of Christ and God, saying, with deep solemnity: "I have set My King upon My Holy Hill of Zion."

The kings and the peoples may rage, but "My King" shall reign.

In the third stanza we see the King on the throne and the kingdoms of the earth handed over to Him for the purpose of reigning over and judging them.

"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

The coming of Christ means judgment upon the revolting nations.

In the fourth stanza we see the possibility of mercy even in that day of judgment. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and ye perish.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him," or, as it may be rendered, " that take their refuge in Him."

Wrath of the Lamb

In Rev. vi. 15 we get another picture of what is foretold in Ps. ii. At the coming of Christ to this earth " the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the rich men, and the chief captains [Greek means " Generals "], and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves, and in the rocks of the mountains. And they say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and *from the wrath of the Lamb*. For the great day of His wrath is come, and who is able to stand ? "

The last of the four judgments, *the judgment of the Great White Throne*, will be dealt with later on.

The Millennial Temple

During this reign with the King upon the throne, such a temple is to be built as this world has never seen. Far exceeding the glory of the Tabernacle, or Solomon's Temple. It is quite possible a temple will be built in unbelief before Christ appears upon this earth, which will be destroyed at the last great fight

around Jerusalem before the second advent of Christ. In Ezek. xl.-xliii., not only is the temple rebuilt, but Jerusalem is to be restored and glorified. "And he said unto me"—and these are God's words—"Son of man, this is the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever: and the house of Israel shall no more defile My holy name, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, and by the carcases of their kings in their high places" (Ezek. xliii. 7). Jerusalem is to be restored, and that beautiful temple set up.

The Church in the Millennium

What is to be the position of the Church, the saints of God, who have been caught up and who have come down on the Mount of Olives and seen the Lord take kingship over the whole earth? In 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, St. Paul teaches, "Faithful is the saying that if we died with Him we shall also live with Him, if we endure we shall also reign with Him." To-day the true Church is living in Christ, and—glorious fact—Christ is living in us; and, just as surely as Christ is living in us, and we know it to be so, if we endure we shall also reign with Christ. 1 Cor. vi. 2: "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" In that

wonderful fourth chapter of Revelation there is a very vivid picture of the saints reigning with Christ. In the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation, Church history is foretold in prophecy. In the fourth chapter the first verse opens up with quite a different subject. The first three chapters deal with " things that shall shortly come to pass." In the fourth chapter we read: " After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass *hereafter* " (or it may better be translated " after these things "). St. John was then taken up in the Spirit, and saw the throne set in heaven and he strives to describe the One upon the throne, but cannot find words to portray all that he saw. " And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold. . . . The four and twenty elders shall fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and shall worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for

thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they are and were created." Who are these people? In the fifth chapter we are told, in the ninth verse, " and they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase " US." Scholarship has been investigating the subject whether that word " us " should be there, and some of the oldest MSS. declare that the Authorised Version is quite correct in its translation. " Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God with Thy blood, men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." It is generally acknowledged that these fourth and fifth chapters of the Book of Revelation refer to the saints who have been caught up and are reigning with the Lord Jesus Christ. Ps. cxlix. gives a very beautiful description of the future glory of the Church.

Verses 1-4.—The assembly of the saints sing " a new song," just as the twenty-four elders and four living creatures do in Rev. iv. and v.

In verse 5 " the saints are joyful in glory," and in verse 6 " the high praises of God are in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hands." For what purpose? " To execute vengeance upon the nations and punishment upon the peoples. To bind their kings with

chains and their nobles with fetters of iron." That is to say, the saints in some mysterious way are to take part in the judgment of the nations. "This honour have all His saints. Praise ye the Lord."

Israel in the Millennium

What is the position of Israel during the millennium? Isa. xxvii. 6: "Israel shall blossom and bud; and fill the face of the world with fruit." Zech. viii. 23: "In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." That is to say, this race, who for nineteen centuries have despised the Lord Jesus Christ, after they have "looked unto Him whom they have pierced," are to be "a kingdom of priests, an holy nation" (Exod. xix.), who are to go amongst all the nations of the world, in order to be the chief missionary factor for bringing the world to a knowledge of God. Look at Isa. ii. 2-4. "It shall come to pass," says God, "in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come

ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge between nations, and shall reprove many peoples : and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Thus Jerusalem is to become the centre of the world's worship, the Lord Himself reigning there over His redeemed people, His priests who are to be appointed to bring the world to God ; and as a result the earth, through the activities of this priestly nation, " shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

The Spiritual Condition of Mankind during the Millennium

What is to be the spiritual condition of mankind during this age? First of all, look at Zech. xiv. 12ff. Some persons imagine that when the millennium comes there will be no sin upon this earth. In one sense it is true, there will not be vicious sin as is evident today, because the devil will be bound for a thousand years (Rev. xx. 2). But the millennium is not to be an age of absolute sinless-

ness. There will be rebellion against the power and authority of the King in Jerusalem, and jealousy against God's holy nation. There will be disobedience to the word of the Lord that shall go forth that all nations must worship the King in Jerusalem, and as a result there is to be judgment upon the earth throughout the whole of the millennial reign ; therefore it will not be a time of sinlessness. This is proved from the sixteenth verse : " It shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King." Here we are told who the King is— " the Lord of Hosts " : " and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso of all the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, upon them there shall be no rain." So evidently there will be some families of the earth who will not obey the voice of the Lord their God, and judgment will come upon them. " And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither shall it be upon them ; there shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite the nations that go not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles." So there is to be punishment and judgment upon the earth against disobedience to the King who is reigning in Jerusalem.

The Physical Condition of Mankind during the Millennium

When our first parents were first created, before sin and hereditary disease became so prevalent in the world, mankind lived to a great age. Methuselah lived 969 years, Adam 930, Seth 912, Noah 950, Shem 600, Terah 205, Abraham 175, Isaac 180, Jacob 147. Sin has since played such havoc with mankind that a man is looked upon as a great marvel if he can live till he is a hundred years old. The average age of man to-day is under forty years. But in the millennial day the power of sin is to be curtailed to a tremendous extent, for the simple reason that the devil will be bound for a thousand years, and there will not be the same temptations, trials, difficulties and spiritual warfare against spiritual enemies that mankind now is face to face with. We little realise that we every one of us fight not against flesh and blood, but that there are hosts of wicked spirits doing their utmost to hinder us in our spiritual lives and the work of God in us, both within our bodies as well as our souls.

The Book of Isaiah throws much light upon the millennial age. In Isa. xxxv. 5, 6: "Then"—that is, in Messiah's day—"the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears

of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Isa. lxv. 19: "The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days"—now notice this—"nor an old man that hath not filled his days."

It may be quite possible during the millennial age for men to live as long as they lived in the first ages—nine hundred or a thousand years—or to live throughout the whole thousand years of the millennium. It is quite possible for a child to die a hundred years old; "and the sinner"—the disobedient one in that day—"being a hundred years old shall be accursed." "And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them."

The Condition of the Animal World in the Millennium

In Rom. viii. 18 there is a very vivid picture of the whole of creation as it is to-day. "The whole creation groaneth." Verse 19: "The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth." What for? "Waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation

was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." So in Isaiah sixty-five, and the twenty-fifth verse, we are told : " The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord." The conditions of animals will be quite changed. When our first parents sinned, the whole of creation fell. The whole of this universe is fallen. Animals are fallen because of man's sin. When man is restored again to favour with God, God will restore to the whole creation its former glory, and this world will be a lovely and beautiful world once again ; all nature in harmony with its Maker.

The Moral Condition of People in the Millennium

Possibly there will be a complete absence of

crime, suicide, avaricious quest of wealth, insanity, prisons, murder and fearful temptation. In this present age no one is tempted like the Christian and those who wish to be holy, who are just longing for God to be glorified in their lives. The devil comes to us with a host of his demon spirits with vile suggestions and awful temptations and is seeking to drag us down—our thoughts and our souls—into the mire, and render us inefficient for the work which God has given us to do. It is true we have victory now through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God victory can be claimed over all evil thoughts and vile suggestions. The devil is a conquered foe. Praise God for that! But in those days there will be no such foul temptations, no such difficulties as mankind has to face in the spiritual realm to-day.

The Millennial Age will be an Age of Abnormal Harvests

The curse will be taken off the ground. When man fell God said, "Cursed be the ground for thy sake." That curse is going to be removed. Ezek. xxxvi. 28: "Ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people and I will be your God. And I will save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn and

will multiply it and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the nations." A time of abnormal harvests. The thirty-fourth chapter, verses twenty-six and twenty-seven : " I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing ; and I will cause the shower to come down in its season : there shall be showers of blessing."

We spiritualise this now, and rightly so ; but in those days showers of blessing are going to be a literal fact. " And the tree of the field shall yield its fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase and they shall be secure in their land ; and they shall know that I am the Lord when I have broken the bars of their yoke, and have delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them."

Israel and the Nations in the Millennium

This age is going to bring wonderful things for Israel, who, in Isaiah lxi, 5, is seen to be waited upon hand and foot by the nations. The Jews to-day are called aliens in every country of the world. But God says to this people, " Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the

priests of the Lord : men shall call you the ministers of our God : ye shall eat the wealth of the nations, and in their glory ye shall boast yourselves." This is what God is going to do for the Jew. " For your shame ye shall have double ; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion : therefore in their land they shall possess double : everlasting joy shall be unto them."

A Universal Reign of Peace

In the millennium there shall be no war (Isa. ii. 4). " They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." When the King comes there will be no more war, no more millions of pounds spent on armaments, and no more war of " nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." In this wretched terrible existence which we are going through to-day, men's hearts are failing them for fear of what is to come upon this earth. Then there will be no more of that fear, for there shall be a reign of peace, prosperity and plenty.

The End of the Millennium

The millennial dispensation is to end in disaster. At the end of this time of peace,

prosperity, happiness and joy throughout the whole world, a sad thing is to happen. "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished.' That is why there is peace and prosperity—because the enemy of souls, the deceiver is bound. "After this he must be loosed for a little time" (Rev. xx.).

Satan loosed

Verse 7.—"And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." A great revolt against the King. "And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints above, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false

prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." And thus will end that great reign with the devil loosed.

Why?

Now, why should God in His sovereign power have foreseen and foretold that such disaster should come at the end of that glorious reign? Well, we must remember this fact: the majority or practically all the people born in the millennial age will be ignorant of what temptation really is. They will have been living in an abnormal reign as far as mankind is concerned; and, although during that reign there is to be a certain amount of rebellion, seeing that the human heart is not always going to obey the voice of God, the great enemy of souls must deal with the hundreds of millions of people who are upon the earth and test them as to their fidelity to their King. A great testing time comes as the deceiver again, possibly as an "angel of light," will go in and out among those nations to draw away their loyalty to the King in Jerusalem, by his great powers of deception as previously. Mankind will not learn from past history. Satan will bewitch and deceive and gather together the nations to rebel against the King in Jerusalem. Just as the allied armies approach the King in His glory, a fire will fall

from heaven, and the devil that deceived them is to be cast into the lake of fire and shall be tormented day and night.

The Great White Throne

Thus will end the serpent, Satan, the Devil, the great enemy of God and man. And immediately following that great rebellion St. John " saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne ; and books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of Life, and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works."

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them : and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of Life, he was cast into the lake of fire." Not only is the devil done away with, but also all who have rejected and despised or been indifferent to the claims of the Lord their God, will meet their final doom.

Conclusion

Now, to bring this important subject to a conclusion. We all have living in our homes, perhaps, parents, brothers or sisters, friends and relations, who, unless their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, will surely have to stand before that awful "great white throne." Would it not be well for us, realising that these things are to be realities, to come into the presence of our holy God and ask Him to make these things real to us and to open our eyes that we may see the awfulness of sin and the terrible consequences of the result of sin—that lake of fire, that eternal doom, whatever it may be, of those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life?

May God the Holy Spirit make known to us as never before what the holiness of God is. He is so holy that He cannot behold iniquity; and any soul that has iniquity upon his conscience or upon his heart can never dwell in the holy presence of God.

May God the Holy Spirit lay upon our hearts as never before the great love of God who would save mankind from such a terrible doom. "It is the will of God that all men should be saved." God has given to us the privilege and awful responsibility of being the

medium and instruments through whom His love may flow and through whom God may warn men of the terrible destiny with which mankind is face to face.

To this end we Christians must study prophecy as we have never studied it. We have only just had a glimpse into the Word of God from Genesis to the Book of Revelation. Shall we not, then, decide, God helping us, to go through the whole Bible chapter by chapter, seeking as we have never sought before to understand the mind and will of God for mankind, and, understanding it, placing ourselves at His disposal, in the attitude of prayer and supplication, pleading: "Lord, have Thy way with me. Do with me as Thou wilt. Use me, occupy with me, so that everybody who comes into touch with me may realise that I am Thine, at Thy disposal, spending and being spent to the glory of God"?

Rev. xxii. 20. "He which testifieth these things saith, Yea; I come quickly. Amen: Come Lord Jesus."

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